

A  
MOST PLAINE

and profitable Exposition of the  
Booke of *Ester*, deliuered in  
26. *Sermons.*

By Peter Merlin, one of the Ministers of the  
Church of Garnezey:

And now translated into English, for the helpe of  
those who wanting the knowledge of the  
tongues, are yet desirous of the vnder-  
standing of the Scriptures and  
true Godlinesse.

With a Table of the principall points of doctrine  
contained therein.

Psalme 34. 19.

*Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord  
deliuereth him out of them all.*



LONDON  
Printed by Thomas Cress  
1599.



# A MOST PLAIN

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Booke of Acts, delivered in  
20. Sermons.

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Church of Canterbury.

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congrues, are yet ignorant of the under-  
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With a Table of Contents.



Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord  
delivereth him out of them all.



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THE TRANSLATOR  
to the Reader, wisheth grace  
and mercy from God the Father,  
in Christ Iesus.



*I*t is to bee lamented  
(deare Christian bro-  
ther) even with bloudie  
teares, that the policies  
& subtilties of satan o-  
sed in the time of dark-  
nesse & superstition, and  
not better discerned, or

at the least not avoyded in this cleare light of  
the Gospell. The Apostle S. Paul saith that 2. Cor. 2. 14.  
he was not, (and by his example we should not  
be) ignorant of his enterprises, and subtil  
crafts; For this ignorance in not knowing,  
and negligence in not avoyding, are the causes  
why many runne headlong into his nets, and  
are taken captives to do his will. Amongst 1. Tim. 3. 26.  
which nets and snares of his, wherewith hee  
draweth soules into perdition, he hath not any



# THE EPISTLE

more gādfull vnto himfelfe, more buttfull  
vnto man, then the writing, publishing & rea-  
ding of idle, fruitlesse, fithie & wicked booke.  
This is perceined most plainely in Papistrie,  
wherein it is lawfull to publish or reade any  
booke but those that are good, and which in  
any sort might tend to the opening of ignora-  
ce and reformation of wickednesse. Which thing  
a learned man of our age complaineth to haue  
happened at the time of the alteration of reli-  
gion, in the wofull raigne of Queene Mary,  
when the Bible and all booke of religio were  
banished & Mori Arthure, with the like re-  
ceived into the Princes & Nobles chambers.  
Satan is the same which euer he hath bene, an  
auncient Aduersarie, and old Serpent; and  
therefore euer worketh to the same end, that  
is to our destruction, every day more cunning-  
ly then other: and euen by the same meanes  
which euen now I shalke of. For who so list to  
take a view, may easily see, there haue moe of  
those hobgoblin booke, having neither shewe  
of reason, nor likelyhood of any truth; and  
more vnfauoury and vnfaustfull matters bene  
partly raked up out of obliuion, and partly by  
setting on the glosse of fauer conceits as it were  
new coyned, within these fewe yeares, then  
since the abolishing of Papistrie in many yeres  
before

R. Aschame  
Præface to  
his schoole-  
maister.

1. Pet. 5. 8.

Reu. 12. 9.

10.

11. 2. 10. 2

22. 5. 11. 1

## TO THE READER.

before. What the Devils purpose is is appar-  
 tant, to murther ignorance, and cherish wicked-  
 nesse: what we should do herein we cannot be  
 ignorant, each enery one in his place and cal-  
 ling, to set himselfe to the bewraying & bea-  
 ding downe of Satans practises. Wherein for  
 mine owne part, as in my place I cease not ac-  
 cording to the measure of the graces of G. O. D.  
 committed vnto me, by my voice to affect it,  
 so haue I aduentured both by the translation  
 of this booke, and by this short & rude admo-  
 nition in writing to deal with others further  
 of, that whither the Authors voice nor mine  
 could reach, our penne might, and where he  
 (either in French or Latine) could not be under-  
 stood, mine Englishing of him might instruct.  
 As for those who by the penning of these  
 bookes defile their owne wits, and by the pub-  
 lishing of them, both abuse other mens time,  
 and defame that Noble and worthy Art of  
 Printing. I desire them even by the mercies  
 of G. O. D. (if they make any account of that  
 dreadful account, which in the last iudgement  
 they shall render of every idle word, and Mat. 16  
 (therefore much more of idle and worse wri-  
 ting.) that they looke into this policie of Sa-  
 tan and detest it, knowing that his promise of  
 the knowledge of good & euil, performs Gen. 3



## THE EPISTLE

but evil vnto those that beleene him: and that they acknowledge God to bee the Authour of those gifts and ornaments of wit and learning which they possesse, and therefore vse them vnto his glorie. The Printers, who for the greedinesse of a little gaine, lose the greatest gaine, which is godlinesse, and the gain that groweth by that, euen vernal life, if in time they repent not: I exhort to consider how excellent members they be or should be of a Christian Common-wealth, how excellent & euen miraculous Art they professe: and how profitable they might be vnto the Church of God, which now by printing these ougly pamphlets, they iniurie and (as much as in them lyeth) pull downe. The graue and reuerend Fathers vnto whome the ouersight of bookes to passe the Print is committed, in most humble and earnest maner I beseech, that yet in time they stop this mischiefe, which they know better the

I. I. I. MO. I I can tel them, how much it tendeth to the dishonour of God, whose glorie they are appointed to set forth, and to the disgrace of the Church whereof they are ouer-seers.

And you (o deare Christians whosoever) that shall by Gods providence read this simple admonition, if you haue at any time bene tainted with an itching desire of reading such fables

## TO THE READER.

fables and toys, yet now at the last come to  
amendment out of the snares of the diuel. 2. Tim. 2. 26.

Whiles it is yet to day harden not your hearts, but heare the voice of God sounding Plal. 95.

in his word, and soundly set forth and explain-  
ed by godly learned men. Hearken not unto

Satans promises for he wil deceiue thee, as the

woman of Samaria did her neighbor, who hid  
her child when she had promised to dresse him

2. Kin. 6. 19.

to morrow: the very Heathen can tell thee,  
Sera nimis vita est crastina, viue hodie:

To morrowes life is all too late,

Live thou to day, that thou'lt thy state.

If we may not in Salomons iudgement, bid  
our neighbour come to morrow, much lesse

Prou. 3. 28.

maist thou bid God come againe to mor-

Reu. 3. 20.

row, when he standeth at thy doore and  
knocketh. Use then the opportunitie which

God hath given thee by the publishing of good  
bookes, and mispend not thy time any longer

in reading damnable and wicked Treatises.

Thou hast (the Lordes name be euer blessed  
therefore) the holie Bible, the most necessary,

the most profitable booke, euen the booke of  
life, and that dispersed in infinit numbers ea-

sie to be gotten. Thou hast also euen in thy mo-  
ther



# THE EPISTLE

De. 2. m. 7.
2. l. 19.
De. 2. m. 7.
De. 2. m. 7.
De. 2. m. 7.
De. 2. m. 7.
 Other tongue, Expositions, Readings, Comments,  
 Sermons, Catechismes innumerable, which all  
 tend to the opening of that booke, and to make  
 the understanding thereof easie vnto thee. For  
 the furthering whereof, seeing I had nothing  
 of mine owne worthie the vizen in this learned  
 age. I haue taken some time which I might  
 best spare from mine ordinary functiō of prea-  
 ching of the word, and haue employed it in this  
 translation. Whereby if I may do any good euen  
 vnto the rudest, and simplest, for whose cause  
 I vndertooke it, I haue my desire: the learned  
 haue the Fountaines iout of which they may  
 draw in abundance this is vndertaken to help  
 the vnlearned, and unskilfull in the tongues.

De. 2. m. 7.
De. 2. m. 7.
De. 2. m. 7.
 Touching the Author of this booke, and  
 the occasion why he vndertooke it, I am shortly  
 to admonish thee. He was a French man,  
 and sometimes Preacher vnto the King of  
 France that now is, then King of Navarre;  
 and therefore he bendeth himselfe principa-  
 ly to touch the state of that Countrey: and be-  
 ing by those broyles which then were raised  
 by the League, against the professors of the  
 Gospell, drinen to forsake his Countrey, he  
 came into the Isle of Getnezey, within her  
 most excellent Maiesties dominions, where  
 he was accepted for one of the Ministers of  
 that

## TO THE READER.

that Church, and there he delivered first in French unto his Auditorie, and afterward committed to writing in Latin these Sermons, which herenow (good Reader) thou hast now in English. The occasion why he tooke this booke in hand, was upō the death of the Duke of Guise, who as an Haman had set himselfe against the Church of God, and was by the same Assuerus, whose power and authority he had before abused (he meaneth the French King Henry the third) suddenly slaine at an assembly of the states at Bloys, where he thought himselfe most sure of obtaining his purpose against all the godly; and was most secure of his owne state. The observing of this, serveth to open the Authours meaning in diuers places, which otherwise might seem somewhat dark, & therefore thus briefly I set it down to thee.

The profit that shall come by the reading of this Treatise, and the principall points contained therein, I had rather euery man should finde by prooffe in reading the booke, then spend time in blazing it before hand. And therefore I commit it to thine owne care and diligence, praying God to open thine hart to vnderstand, and blesse thy diligence, to profit heereby both in knowledge & practise, euen for Christ Iesus sake, to whose grace I commend thee.

Farewell.



Gods Ship, Gods Church with many a tempest tost,  
 With waves of woe, and furious billowes beaten,  
 Oft seemes to man to be euen fully lost,  
 Quight swallowed up, and of those surges eaten:  
 When straight at hand Gods succour doth appeare,  
 Who staies the stormes, and doth all troubles cleare!

The worldlings proud, fierce foemen to this barge,  
 Do swim in wealth, and float in honors hie:  
 So that they seeme deuoyd of any carke,  
 And beare their topsailes flanting in the skie:  
 When sodainly Gods vengeance doth appeare,  
 Which makes them buy their passed pleasure deare.

By those same stormes God tries his chosen pheere,  
 His Church, his spouse, how constant she wil stand;  
 Corrects his children whom he holds most deare,  
 Lest that they perish with that wicked band.  
 Whom, when they haue those perils stoutly past,  
 He doth conduct to happie hauen at last.

By those faire calmes which wicked men enjoy,  
 Without excuse Gods bountie doth them make:  
 And as the Oxe is fatted on with ioy,  
 Is brought at last vnto the dolefull stake:  
 The worldlings so doth time in pleasure spend,  
 But goes to paine, when Death his life doth end.

These changes rise are each where to be seene,  
Vpon this stage whereon we play our parts:  
Examples strange in enery age hath beene,  
If men had grace to laie them to their harts.  
But specially this storie sweet and true,  
Will laie these things apparant to thy view.

Then reade with heed what in this booke is pend,  
And these examples to thy selfe applie.  
Both text and Comment drue vnto this end,  
And as it were with ioynt consent do crie:  
First follow Vertue in thine actions all,  
Then flee from vice, for feare of endles fall.





Page 6. l. 11, for Monarch, read Monarchie. Pag. 7. l. 8. for  
 remaine, remained, l. 16 for detts, nets, l. 50. of the which  
 put out the. Pa. 18. l. 2. for waite, waiting, Pa. 19. marg. for  
 Dan. 1. 32. Dan. 3. 3. Pa. 20. l. 1. for his, this Pa. 26. l. 1. for  
 Siiver, Silver, 2. read, received with than(giving), 1. wh  
 for these, the P. 31. l. 2. for Bides, Besides. P. 33. l. 1. read  
 who euen when Bab. Marg. for Eccle. 10. 9 read 10. 10  
 P. 47. l. 2. read, make a small, l. 11. a perrode put for a co  
 lon, l. 13. for and are, E. 64. in the title, for the second Se  
 the fourth Ser.



# THE FIRST

## SERMON V P O N

*the Booke of Ester.*

*The first Sermon containing the argument of the Booke, and the exposition of the two first verses: that is, of the time when these things were done, and of the greatness of the dominion of Assuerus.*

### CHAP. I.

*In the dayes of Assuerus (this is that Assuerus, that reigned from India euen vnto Aethiopia, over an hundred and seuen and twentie Prouinces.)*

*2. In those dayes when the King Assuerus sat on his throne, which was in the Pallace of Susa.*



Stories which contain the declaration of things true and profitable for the life of man, haue alwayes beene greatly esteemed of all men, who

**B**

were



were not altogether Barbarous, as well  
 for the great pleasure, as for the excee-  
 ding profite, which is receiued by them:  
 and because besides it is a most com-  
 mendable matter for vs to knowe, and a  
 shamerfull matter to be ignorant of, those  
 noble and valiant acts, which haue beene  
 atchieued by those that liued in former a-  
 ges before vs. So then, *Cicero* the cheefe  
 Father of the Romane eloquence, did not  
 without cause say, that Histories are the  
 witnesses of times, the light of truth, the  
 life of memorie, the schoole-mistresse of  
 life, and the messenger of antiquitie. For  
 without Histories, what certaintie can we  
 haue of things past? what truth of things  
 spoken and done in former ages? howe  
 voyde shoulde our memorie bee of the  
 knowledge of so many notable things,  
 which hapned before our dayes? and then  
 what skill or vse could there bee of things  
 altogether vnknowne? We should as chil-  
 dren passe ouer our life, ignorant of all re-  
 uerend antiquitie. Now then, if every Hi-  
 storie faithfully committed to writing, de-  
 serueth this prayle, and longeth worthily  
 in these titles, howe much more may we  
 truly say, that the sacred Histories onely,

are free from all suspicion, which were en-  
dited by the Spirit of God; written by  
the Prophets, and carefully preserved in  
the Church; which sette before our eyes  
the true originall of all things, teach the  
beginning and order of times, lay downe  
the truth of all things past, stirre vp in vs,  
and refresh the memorie of works, both  
humane and diuine, and propose vnto vs  
sound examples, by which we may frame  
our whole life to the true knowledge and  
sincere worship of God. Adde hereunto,  
that the state of the Church is represen-  
ted vnto vs by the same Histories, and  
that the enemies of the same, her fights  
and sufferings, Gods manifold succours,  
and at the last, the full deliuerance there-  
of are in them plainly set downe to her  
view. Amongst all the rest, this Historie  
of *Ester*, which by Gods fauor we take in  
hand, doth propose vnto vs, even as in a  
glasse, the wonderful prouidence of God,  
in preserving, cherishing, and defending  
his Church: then againe, the treacheries  
and cruell mindes of her most deadly ene-  
mies: and last of all, the carefulnesse and  
diligence of the godly, as well as all other  
things, as then principally, when dangers



hang ouer their heads, and threaten vnto them all extremitie. The name of the author is vnkowne, neither doth it much auail vs to know who wrote it (as in such like Histories of the *Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, and Iob,*) so that we know that it is sacred and diuine, and hath been so taken and receiued alwaies in the Church of God: sith the holy ghost hath engrauen it in the hearts of the faithfull by sufficient testimonies. This Historie therefore bearing for title the name of *Ester*, (because *Ester* was as a principall instrument, which God did vse for the deliuerance of his Church; when it was like vtterly to haue bin destroyed in her time, throughout all the prouinces of *Assuerus*) is adorned with this note of diuine maiestie and vndoubted truth, and layde vp in writing amongst the holy monuments, for the instruction and consolation of the Church, throughout all ages. For as the

*Apostle Paul* saith: *Whatsoever things are written afore time, are written for our learning, that wee through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might haue hope.* For so notable and extraordinarie deliuerances of the Church of God, at sundrie times,

good and

Rom. I 5.4.

*upon the Booke of Ester.*

and in diuers manners, were not gathered together and committed to writing, without the ordinance and direction of Gods diuine prouidence: but that diligently beholding howe great a care the Lord hath alwayes had of his people, and with how vnwearied endeuour hee hath brought vnto them present helps in greatest distresse: we may learne to place our hope in him alone, and to rest our selues onely on him, whose goodnesse and truth endureth for euer.

The time when these things happened, was in the raigne of *Assuerus*: but who this *Assuerus* was, or at what time he reigned, it is not agreed vpon by all writers: yet notwithstanding by comparing of other places of holy Scripturo, in which mention is made of *Assuerus*, as *Efra* 4.6. it appeareth that this *Assuerus* is hee, whom the prophane Historians call *Darius*, the sonne of *Hystaspis*, which after the death of *Cambyses* the son of *Cyrus*, had obtained the Kingdom. Wherefore, whereas this Historie setteth down a recheasall from the third yeare of the raigne of *Assuerus*, and the conspiracie of *Haman* fallies out the twelfth yeare:



6 The first Sermon

those things which are here recited, seeme  
to haue happened in the two and thirti-  
eth year after that the people by the de-  
crete of *Cyrus*, had leaue to returne out of  
the captiuitie into theyr owne Countrey.  
For *Cyrus* and *Cambyses* reigned nine  
years: the two *Magi* surprised *Babylon* a  
year, about the ende whereof *Assuerus*  
obtained the Kingdome. So that there  
were but only thine yeares past from the  
establisment of the Monarch of the  
Persians and Medes, when *Assuerus* got  
the Kingdome, in whose twelfth year  
this conspiracie happened. But then it  
must needs bee that *Mardochæus* must  
bee verie olde, because as wee shall  
heare in the seconde Chapter, hee was  
carried into Captiuitie with *Ieshoniah*,  
from which time vnto this, there pas-  
sed more then foure score yeares. But  
the Lorde as often as the necessitie of  
his Church hath so required, hath  
preserued certaine men strong and  
sounde for that purpose. And let these  
things suffice to haue bene spoken of  
the time. For their opinion hath not  
sufficient ground, which place these  
things vnder the time of the Captiuitie,  
because

upon the Books of Ester.

because that during the time of that first  
Monarchie of the Babylonians, none  
of the Persians had so large an Empire  
as this *Affectus*, reigning from *India* vnto  
*Aethiopia*. The drift of this Historie is to make  
manifest howe the poore Church of  
those who remaine dispersed in diuers  
regions, into which they were led awaie  
captiues (when as a most certain and pre-  
sent destruction hanged ouer their heads)  
was by the peculiar care and fauour of  
God, deliuered from the slaughter, and  
were plucked out of the iawes of  
their enemies: the death which they  
brained, and the dett and traps which  
they prepared for themselves, being rui-  
ned ouer vpon the Viceroyes owne  
heads. So that this Historie consisteth  
of two partes, of the which the first con-  
taineth the mischief prepared against the  
Iewes, in the five first Chapters: the  
other containeth the happy issue and  
miraculous deliuerance from them, in  
the rest of the Booke. As concerning  
the former parte, in the first two Chap-  
ters is recited the relecting of *Hasdrabael* and  
the exalting of *Ester* succeeding in her  
place.



**The first Sermon**

place. In the third Chapter is recorded howe greatly *Haman* is had in fauour and authoritie with *Ahasuerus* & his courtiers, and with howe great and deadly hatred hee prosecuted *Mardocheus* and all the rest of the Iewes. The fourth containeth the prayers and supplications of the Iewes vnto God, when they sawe so certaine a destruction to be readie to light on them. The fift sheweth the preparation to the deliuerance, the wrath and furie of *Haman* notwithstanding increasing still against *Mardocheus*; and this is the first part of the booke. In the other part wherein the deliuerance is contained, in the sixth Chapter, is declared the honour which *Mardocheus* receiueth from the King by the ministrie of *Haman*; and heereupon the beginning of the evils that followed, and an extreme dispaire of bringing his purpose to passe, is foretold him by his wife. In the seuenth it is noted, howe he was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared. In the two next Chapters is related the slaughter of the enemies killed by the Iewes, as well in *Susa*, as in all other prouinces, to the number of three score and fiftene thousand men, amongst whom

whom were the tenne sonnes of *Haman* haine, and after hanged vpon gallows. Herehence ariseth great ioy and gladnes to the Iewes, and that day is appoynted yearly to celebrate so great a benefite receiued at Gods hand. The last Chapter finally teacheth, that *Mardocheus* beeing in great fauour and authoritie with the King, and succeeding in *Hamans* place, employeth al his force to the good of the church. And thus this Historie containeth the space of fifteene yeares, though some count more, some lesse.

The vse and profit of this Historie is great. For first out of it wee learne, what for the most part, is the state and condition of the Church in this world: to wit, to be dispersed heere and there vnder the power and dominion of infidell Kings: to be basely accounted of, and hated of ambitious Courtiers: to bee subiect to manie slaunders, and to be appoynted euen vnto death: so that it shall be free for euery one without controulment, to exercise tyrannie against it. Contrariwise, that the children of this worlde, (whiles others mourne, are despised, and subiect to the croffe) follow their pleasures, abounding in riches



**The first Sermon**  
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riches and honour, and they who are  
 stirred vpp with greater rage of vniuersall  
 minds, go about to compasse the death  
 and destruction of the poore faythfull  
 ones by which wicked counsels Kings ea-  
 sily suffer themselves to bee perswaded,  
 and so deceiued. But all these things hap-  
 pen not without Gods decree and pro-  
 uidence, to those whom by these meanes  
 hee will haue exercised and prooued,  
 that they may acknowledge the great-  
 nesse of theyr sinnes, bee remooued  
 from the loue of this worlde, be brought  
 to true repentance, bee made like vn-  
 to theyr head, yelde testimonie, and  
 witnesse to the truth, and bee lifted  
 vpp into the hope of the Kingdome  
 of heauen. The causes then of the af-  
 flictions with which for the most parte  
 wee see the Church of GOD to wres-  
 tle, are on the one side the will of God,  
 both that the spots and blemishes where-  
 with as yet shee is dimmed, may bee  
 washed away, and also that the vertue  
 wherewith GOD hath endued her,  
 may shine the more bright. On the o-  
 ther side, the most venomous hatred  
 of the worlde against the truth and pure  
 Religion,

*upon the Booke of Ester.*      M

Religion, and also the credulitie of  
those, who sitte at the stearne of the  
greatest Empires, together with theyr  
great carelesnesse, to search out the  
true or false Religion, or to iudge of  
it uprightly. Especially wee are to ob-  
serve the trecherous and exceeding rage  
of Satan, mooving and driving men at  
his becke, and going about by all meanes  
possible, to extinguish the light of the  
heavenly doctrine.

Next wee are to note what are the  
exercises of the faythfull, when afflictions  
growe vpon them, to wit, tears,  
fasting, prayer, whence they hope for  
helpe: with what constancie and bold-  
nesse they ought to bee endured, that are  
honoured with the greatest gifts in the  
Church: who ought, following the  
example of *Mardochai* and *Ester*, bot-  
tomming all difficulties, so to employ  
theyr whole labour for the Church,  
whensoeuer any daunger is like to fall  
on it. For lette this be the onely ende of  
those gifts whatsoeuer, which men haue  
receiued from God, and of the authoritie  
and fauour, whereby they be of power  
to, even the glory of God, and the good



of the Church, leaving the event of those things which by reason of our dutie, the feare of God are taken in hand, vnto his good will and pleasure. Nowe when as God is at hand, the helper of his, in fitt time, and by so many meanes: we learne first, that it was not without cause said, that *The eye of the Lord is vpon the righteous, that feare him, and hope in his mercie: and that He that keepeth Israel shall not slumber* and therefore that wee may safely lean vnto him, and looke for his helpe. Next that the Lord is admirable in the defence of his, and reuenge of his enemies: that we may know, that it is *hee alone that sanctifieth and reuengeth*: that prayer and supplications are not powred out before him, or trust reposed in his goodnesse in vaine, and that al may be compelled to acknowledge in his works, his hand and power. Therefore often times by himselfe, without any meanes of man, reuengerh he himselfe on his enemies. So in olde time Pharaoh runnes headlong into the sea with his horses & chariots: so the host of Sennacherib was slain and discomfited. Some times indeed he useth humane meanes, but those so strange and vnlooke for, that

*Psal. 93. 18.*

*Psal. 121.*

*Psal. 124. 30.*

*Erod. 14.*

*2. King. 19.*

*upon the Bank of Eſter.* 13

all men are driuen to wonder at it: as  
when Eglon was ſlain by Eboni & Sifera by  
the hoſt of the Midianites, ouer-  
throwne with a great ſlaughter, by three  
hundred men following Gedeon, who  
might not, but onely blew their trumpets:  
and as this Hamei of whom we are  
ſpeake, hanged vpon the ſame gallows  
which himſelfe had ſette vp, even by his  
commandement, of whom before he had  
reuiued ſo great honours. Hereby it is  
euent, that the hearts of Kings are in the  
hand of the Lorde, which hee turneth at his  
pleaſure: ſo that in a moment hee ſo chan-  
geth the hand of him who had ſigned and  
borne the death of the poore and inno-  
cent faithfull, that he turneth the ſame to  
punishment of them, whom before he  
had furniſhed with authoritie and power,  
for the overthrowing of the true Religi-  
on. Here alſo this is apparant, that when  
God goeth about to deliuer his Church  
from the oppreſſion of tyrants, hee firſt  
commonly taketh away with ſhame and  
reproach, the cheefe and head, and after  
that he hath ſet vp his reuenging hand againſt the  
members of the conſpiracie:  
Pharae perished not alone in the ſea,  
but

Judg. 3.22.  
22. & 4.21.  
& 7.22.

PROV. 21.1.

X



but together with his host. So Eglon  
slaine; and then the rest are punished.

Sisara is put to flight with his armie.

Haman is hanged; after that his sonne  
and a great multitude of the enemies  
of Gods people, are utterly destroyed  
those being chosen to execute this ven-  
geance, and strengthened therunto, by  
authoritie of the lawfull Magistrate, who  
were before appoynted to the Massacre.

Neither are the examples fewe of  
others such exploits, occurring euen  
where in holy Writ, as in the History  
of the Judges, Samuel, and the King  
in which we often see the people of God  
defending themselves with lawfull armes  
to haue destroyed their enemies with  
great slaughters, and not to haue spared  
often times neither women nor children  
great is the wrath of God, in reuenging  
the iniuries offered to himselfe, in the  
person of his Church; whom hee loues  
as his most dearest spouse. So many times  
when the enemies of the people of God  
are most ioyfull and triumphant, as se-  
ming vnto themselves to haue fully at-  
tained the end of their practises, then is the  
ioy & triumph turned into mourning and  
sorrow.

now? Contrarywise, the groanes of the  
 hatch, and her teares, are changed into  
 the voyce of a song and mirth, as the Pro-  
 phet singeth. Sorrow may lodge with her for  
 a night, but joy commeth in the morning: and  
 the wrath of God endureth but a moment, but  
 his favour is life everlasting: Let the faith-  
 full therefore consecrate vnto the Lord  
 their joy & gladnesse, and let them in it  
 be a perpetuall monument & remem-  
 brance of his benefits, as here we shall see  
 to be done by these Jewe captives, who  
 received so great safetie from the Lord  
 and thus much sufficeth to haue spoken  
 of the fruits of this Historie againe blinck  
 Let vs now then sit in hand with libe-  
 ring it selfe, and first heere offereth  
 selfe vnto vs, the grammere of the story  
 of *Ahasuerus*, which is described vnto  
 by two circumstances: the first, that he  
 reigned from *Vadai* to *Arbacia*; the se-  
 cond, that twentie seauen provinces obli-  
 ged him, & that he had his empire all felde  
 the royall Citie *Susa*, among the *Medes*  
 & *Persians*: So that the great parte of the  
 whole world, was subiect vnto him: euen  
 the goodliest, richest, & most fruitful pro-  
 uinces: seeing he had vnder his dominion  
 all

psal. 30. 5.

2. 21. 50. 27

e. 2. 4. 10. 1. 1



all Asia, and no small part of Africa, in  
 the which Egypt and Aethiopia are situ-  
 ate. So Babylon, Assyria, Syria, and Iudea  
 were at his commaunde, and hee go-  
 uerned al these kingdomes in great peace,  
 being free from the feare of all enemies,  
 either abroad or at home, which is ea-  
 sily gathered by that feast, of which a lit-  
 tle after we shall entreate. So the Church  
 then was vnder his Empire: for they that  
 were returned againe into Iudea by Cyrus  
 permission, acknowledged him for their  
 King, did yeeld him fealtie, and paid him  
 tribute. But be it farre from vs, that wee  
 should iudge by this dignitie and large-  
 nesse of so peaceable and flourishing an  
 Empire, that Asuerus and the Persians  
 were more fauored & cared for by God,  
 then all other Kings and people. For God  
 did more esteeme those poore and mise-  
 rable captiues dispersed here and there,  
 and subiect to that great monarch, then  
 either the King himselfe, or the rest of his  
 subjects, seeing they were the Lords in  
 the world, a chosen people, a holy nation, a king-  
 dom of priests. Wee may not therefore iudge  
 of Gods loue or hatred, by the glorie, dig-  
 nitie, or largenesse of great Empires, but  
 by

Exod. 19.6.

1. Pet. 2.5.9

the forme of the covenant which hee  
 hath made with his: and by the testimonie  
 of that free adoption, into the which  
 the most part are receiued the base  
 and contemptible before men, when the  
 lowe and haucie are reiectcd, because they  
 proudly haue disdained it. In the meane  
 while God will haue his to bee subiect e-  
 uen vnto Infidell Kings, that wee may  
 haue sufficient experience *That the Lords* Iohn. 18:36.  
*Kingdome is not of this world*, neyther that  
 the church is to be sought for in the mag-  
 nificence of the Empires of this worlde.  
 yet notwithstanding, I denie not, but that  
 God giueth Kingdomes and Dominions  
 as to his, euen that it may be made ma-  
 nifest, that Kings are appoynted by God,  
 and that he placeth in the Throne whom  
 pleaseth him: Although the glorie of  
 Kingdomes and Empires in the Church,  
 hath not continued long. *Dauid* indeede  
 was a mightie King: but how great I pray,  
 is the comparison of the Monarchies of *A-  
 syria* and *Babylon*? *Constantine* obtayned  
 the Empire, both of the East and West,  
 and after him some godly Emperours, as  
 was the *Theodosius*, but the glorie of so  
 great an Empire quicklie fell: the barba-  
 C rous



rous Nations that came out of the North  
 spoyling and waste it, and feeding on the  
 chiefe & greatest part of it: the Turke also  
 and Saracens, and other fauourers of *M*  
~~more~~ felt, at this day possessing the  
 greatest part of the worlde. And this  
 not without great cause; least the fayth-  
 full should suppose, that this outward glo-  
 rie and greatnesse of Dominion, were  
 a note of the Church: but rather that they  
 should followe the light of the Gospel  
 for there indeede is the Church, where  
 Christ Iesus is acknowledged for the one  
 lie authour of saluation. Nowe G O D  
 gaue so great an Empire vnto *A*siueru  
 for none other ende, but to preserue po-  
 licie, and the estate of those Nations: to  
 establish lawes, to repressle confusions  
 wherewith among themselues those fiero  
 people woulde haue beene troubled, and  
 to brydle Tyrants, whose pride and a-  
 rogancie quicklie woulde bee, kindled  
 if they were not restrained by a greater  
 power. For great Empires, though in them  
 most corrupt men haue the government  
 yet they bind together (as it were) with  
 firme bande manie people, though othe-  
 wise much different in maners and cond-

tion, and draw them beſide thy good lawes  
and orders to a more ciuill kind of life. God  
by this meanes making a way to his word,  
as oft as it ſeemeth good vnto him, to  
frame men vnto the obedience of his  
will. Let vs not therefore thinke that  
there is heere mention made of the large-  
neſſe of *Aſſuerus* Empire, to the commen-  
dation of his prowefſe and wiſedome, as  
though he by his power and counſell had  
gotten to himſelfe ſo great a Dominions;  
but to lay before our eyes the providence  
of our God, who at his pleaſure appoyne  
th and eſtabliſheth kingdoms: and tranſ-  
lateth them from one nation to another, as  
it was foretold by *Daniel*, and deliuered in  
a dreame to *Nubuchadnezar*, in the viſion  
of that great Image, whole head was of  
gold, the armes and breſt of ſiluer. So we  
haue ſcene it come to paſſe, that that great  
Monarchy of the Baby lonians, which was  
figured by the golden head, was taken a-  
way by the Monarchie of the Perſians  
and Medes, begun by *Cyrus*, encreaſed by  
*Cambyses*, and confirmed by *Aſſuerus*, who  
did not diſcend from *Cyrus*, but was cho-  
ſen King by the neighing of his horſe, as  
Helyſtones report.

Dan. i. 31.

Iſa. 1. 1.



Hee is sayde heere to sit on his throane: whereby his Kingdome is noted to bee peaceable and quiet, so that hee had no neede to go from place to place to re- presse his enemies, or to appease seditions amongst his subiects. So God oftentimes giueth rest vnto mightie Emperours, that theyr Subiects may feare their power; which if they shall attribute to their owne wisdom, and industrie, they truelie commit sacriledge, and GOD oftentimes reuengeth their pride. Of which diuine vengeance let *Nabuchadnezzar* bee an example, who when hee gloryed with himselfe in these woordes, *Is not this that great Babylon which my handes haue built?* was on the suddaine dispoyled of his Kingdome for a while, and throwne out from the societie of men, to categrasse with the beasts of the field.

This *Assuerus*, chose for the chiefe Citie of his Kingdome *Susa*, and so translated the seate of the Empire, from *Babylon*, where before it was, into *Persia*, whereby the Persians might bee acknowledged for the first and principall erectors of this Monarchie. So great then was the power

power of his Monarch, vnder whose shadowe, there was giuen a seate, and some rest to the Church, but not without great troubles, as in regarde of them who were returned into *Iudas*, the Booke of *Ezra* tooke witnesse: and this booke will teach concerning those who remained as yet dispersed in *Chaldea*, *Persia*, *Media*, and other Prouinces. And such shall see the state of the Church, vntill the Sonne of God come, to gather and receiue her into the triumph of eternall glory, and to carry her with himselfe, far aboue all the heauens. To whom alone

bee all honour and glorie

for euermore,

Amen.

C 3 of



power of his Monarch, vnder whose  
**THE SECOND**  
**SERMON.**

Of *Asterius* feasts, from the third verse to  
 the tenth

**CHAP. II.**

3 In the third yeare of his reigne, hee  
 made a feast vnto all his Princes and  
 his seruants, vnto the Princes of the  
 hostes of Persia, and Meda, and to the  
 Captaines and gouernours of the Pro-  
 uinces in his presence.

4 Shewing his riches, the glorie of  
 his Kingdome, and the honour, and  
 Maiestie of his greatnesse: manie  
 dayes, enen an hundred and foure score  
 dayes.

5 ( And when these dayes were al-  
 most expired, the King made a feast  
 to all the people which were found in  
 the royall Citie of Susa, from the  
 greatest to the least seauen dayes: in  
 the

upon the Booke of Ester. 23

the Court of the Garden of the Kings  
Palace.)

Having hangings of white, greene,  
and blew, fastened with Coardes of  
fine Linnen, and Purple, vnto Rings  
of Siluer, and Marble pillars: the  
beds were of Gold, and Siluer, vpon  
a pavement of Porphyrie and Marble,  
and Alabaſter, and ſtones of  
blew colour.

And giuing them drinke in veſſels of  
Golde, and in veſſels differing one  
from an other: and royall Wine in  
abundaunce, according to the power of  
a King.

And the drinking was by an order,  
none might compell: for ſo the King  
had appoynted, to euery officer of his  
houſe, that they ſhould do according to  
euery mans pleaſure.

The Queene Vaſhti made a feaſt alſo  
ſo for the women, in the royall houſe of  
King Aſuerus.



**M**ost magnificent and most sumptuous feasts are heere described vnto vs, whether wee respect the person that maketh them, or the number & qualitie of the guests, or the space of the time wherein they are kept, or lastly the whole furniture, wherein there is nothing but magnificent, & sumptuous, and kinglike. The end of declaring of this, is, not y<sup>e</sup> we should be kept idle in the beholding of the magnificence of this King, and of his exceeding cost, but that we may be taught the occasion, for which *Vashti* the Queen being diuorced, *Ester* a base and abiect Captiue maiden was lifted vppe into her place. God thereby preparing for himselfe an instrument, which hee would yse for the deliuerie of his Church, before it was in danger. There is here mention made of three feasts. The first was made to all the Princes, Captaines, and gouernours of the prouinces, many dayes, euen an hundred & foure score: the other, at which were present as many as dwelt in *Susa* seven dayes. The third was made by the Queene *Vashti*, for the women. Heere we first are to consider the furniture and prouision, then the end of this charge

charge and magnificence, and lastly we are to obserue and note somewhat vpon euery one of these feasts.

The prouision is described from the end of the fift verse, vnto the ninth. And first the place in which the King made this feast to the Princes and Nobles of the whole kingdome, and to all the people that dwelt at *Susa*, in the Court of the Garden of the Kings Pallace. That court must

needes bee great and large, that shoulde receiue so great a multitude of men at a feast. By which also it may bee vnderstoode, at what season of the yeare these things happened, euen aboute the beginning of the Spring, seeing they banquetted abroad out of the house, in the thirde yeare of the reigne of *Ahasuerus*.

The Pauement of this Court was wonderful fayre, and rich, framed by arte of Porphyrie, and Marble, and Alabaster, and stones of blew colour. Neither were the hanginges lesse stately and precious, whether you respect the matter, or the diuerse colours, white, greene, blew, or purple. For seeing that the Coardes were of fine Linnen (this Linnen was more precious then anie Silke) fastened



to rings of Silver, and pillars of marble: it is likely that the arras and tapistrie were entermingled with gold, and exquisite sorts of embroydered works. The beds on which the guests (according to the custome of those times) did sit, were of gold and silver. There was great store of all sorts of choyse and excellent wines, and great varietie of cups and vessels of gold: by which it may easily bee gathered, what excellence there was in other things, as wel in most delicate meates, & varietie of courses, as also in the whole furniture wherewith the guests were serued. All which in their owne nature are not to be blamed, for they are the good gifts of GOD, and by him created good, the vse whereof is good, as Paul teacheth in these words: *Every creature of God is good, and nothing ought to bee refused, if it bee with thanksgiving.* But excesse, in temperauncie, pride, ambition, and vnthankfulnesse, doo corrupt the vse of good things, which yet the faythfull man will vse with a good conscience, and giue God thanks for his exceeding great liberalitie and bountifulnesse, and will lift vppe these eyes of his minde from these

1. Tim. 4.4.

these earthly riches and delights, to the  
contemplation of those which are eternal  
and spirituall; and will thus gather wis-  
dom unto himselfe: If the gifts bee so great which  
the Lorde giues to the vnfaithfull,  
how great shall the aboundance bee of  
good things and delights; which God  
hath layde vp in heauen for his elect  
such as the prophet teacheth them  
fruits of pleasure: and sayth *How  
great is the goodnesse of God, which hee hath  
layde vp for them that feare him?* So shall  
it come to passe, that neither the eyes  
nor other senses of the faythfull, shall bee  
delighted with the outward vse of those  
things which they touch and taste, when  
they shall knowe that there are layde vpper  
for him farre better and more excellent  
things; to the enioying whereof wee  
are intited. I confesse indeede, that  
in this aboundance of earthly delights,  
sobrietie and temperance are greatly  
endangered; for verie hardly can mea-  
sure bee kept: wherefore let the fayth-  
full being called to a feast, bee so much  
the more warie in these things, by howe  
much the way is the more slipperie and  
tending to the fall.

X

*Psal 36.8.  
& 31.19.*

Further



Furthermore, the Law which here the King expressely prescribeth vnto his, is greatly to bee praysed, to wit, *That none should be compelled to drinke ouer largely, but that euery one should drinke according to his thirst and appetite.* For he would not that his house should be made a schoole of intemperancie, and by reason of ouer much drinke and wine, be filled with confusion, wantonnesse, vomites, and such other like effects of drunkennesse. And here let this heathen King be a iudge of many, who boast themselves to be Christians, whose onely care and exercise is this, to compell themselves and others to drinke, & whole nights and dayes to continue in eating, as the manner is almost euerie where in Germany, and in too many places in France and England. And it appeareth by this edict of the King, that euen then this wicked custome had gotten place among the Persians, whose sobrietie and moderation in meate and drinke, was in former ages so much commended: for slippie and bending is the way to intemperancie and euill manners. And thus farre of the place and preparation of the feast.

The end for which the King bestoweth  
this

his great cost, is described in the fourth  
verse. *That hee might shew the riches and  
glorie of his kingdom, and the honour and  
majestie of his greatnesse.* By which words  
appeareth the pride & vanitie of so great  
Monarch, abusing the gifts of God  
to his owne ambition: for which not-  
withstanding he did not give him thanks,  
having received them from him. For  
how great a vanity I pray you is it, to shew  
forth riches gotten by other mens labour  
and industrie, which also hee could not  
have but from his subjects? Yet will I not  
say that Kings and other rich men doo  
none, if at any time they doo make any  
solemne feasts, but I say there ought to  
be another ende then the proude ostenta-  
tion of theyr riches, to wit, that by  
their honest liberalitie they witness  
their charitie, that they nourish concord  
and societie betwene many; that by  
these kindes of benefits they purchase  
the friendshippe and good will of many,  
whom when necessitie shall require, they  
may vse to honest and lawfull purposes:  
Finally, that by their liberalitie they  
may stirre vp others to sing prayses vnto  
God, the giuer of so many and so great  
good



good things, whereby our feasts may be consecrated to him with prayer and thanksgiving. But what a miserable and lamentable thing is it, that a most mighty King could not otherwise make his magnificence and greatnesse to be knowne, then by excessive charge in feasting? For, howe many other things are there whereby he might declare it a great deal better, and with much more profit to ensue both to himselfe and to his subjects, that is, if in euery place he see that all things be gouerned in lawfull order, if the laws retaine their due authority, if right be administred to euery one, if the people be eased of tributes, taxes, & subsidies, if souldiers be contained within militarie discipline, if rewards be giuen with kingly liberalitie to those that deserue them?

And heere wee are especially to call to remembrance that which the Lorde warneth vs, that those who will make a feast which should bee allowed by God should call vnto it not the rich, but the

Luc. 14. 13.

poore, in which thing there is liberalitie indeede. But in this parte wee must also take heede of the leauen of the Pharisees

es, boasting and affectation of vaine glorie before men. Besides, this is also to be noted, that Kings for the most part do bestow that money which they haue gathered with great labor from their subjects, vpon vaine and vnprofitable expenses, so that they seeme to labour more in the dispersing and loosing, then was labour bestowed in the gathering of them together. And thus farre of the end of the feasts made by *Asuerus*. There were many others perhaps, who haue done the like, but this sufficed the holy Scriptures to note him as a cheefe man: and so lette these things thus bee spoken, as well of the furniture of those feasts, as of their ende.

Let vs come now to the speciall consideration of the particulars. First, the feast was celebrated *an hundred and foure score dayes*, that is, full halfe a yeare together, *For all the Princes and seruants of the King*, that is, the rulers of the kingdom, that hee might haue in his view the power of *Persia* and *Media*, that is, the princes and gouernors of the provinces. Which things declare great peace in the whole Empire of *Asuerus*: for hee would



would not haue called vnto him the gouernours of the prouinces to feasting and banquetting, if there had beene warre in any parte of his dominion, or any light suspicion of rebellion. They are not called then to counsaile concerning the weighty affaires of the Common-wealth, but to banquetting and mirth. And thereby it may seeme likely, that they wanted not in that great quiet, all manner of sports that might serue their delight, as musicke, gaming, tilt, and other shewes, as at this day noble men are wonderfully delighted with iesters, enterludes, wilde-fires, daunces, and such like toyes. Beholde heere then, a kingdome full of mirth and pastime, and as it were drowned in delights and pleasures: beholde with what ioyes the Lorde doth fill euery with facietie the children of this world, whiles the Church is oppressed with captiuitie and miseries: beholde the ende of victories obtained by great pollicie and labour of mightie Kings and Counsellors, and with much slaughter of theyr people, euen pleasures and delights. Although they were not come to so great madnesse as *Balsazar*, the last Monarch

the Babilonians, euen when *Babylon* was  
sleged, gaue himselfe to feasting and  
banquetting: or as manie princes in this  
age, whom you shall see euen when  
the estate of their Kingdomes shake and  
are a fall, are yet little moued, but  
are drowned in pleasures, take their fill  
of delights. This was also an euill exam-  
ple for his subiects, when they shoulde see  
the King with all his Princes and Coun-  
sellours, giue themselves to banquetting,  
drinking and delights. For what became  
the meane while of the Prouinces, bee-  
ing deprived so long of their gouernours,  
were to administer iustice vnto them?  
The wise man saith not in vain, *Woe*  
*to the land, whose Princes rise early to play.* Eccle. 10, 9  
in vaine dooth *Esay* threaten the like  
of the Princes of his time, which rose vpeare  
to follow drunkennes. *See* inuicigheth  
mentally against the faults of the Iewes,  
which they made with great riot in beds  
of inuicigheth. Vnlesse the courses of Princes go  
in example of sobrietie and modestie,  
the whole kingdome will easilie let  
the reines vnto surfetting, drunken-  
nes, and lasciuiousnesse: For the whole  
land labors to conforme it selfe vnto the pat-



terme of the King. Besides these gouernours being returned into their prouinces, after so long time of absence employed in ryot, studie to imitate the example of their king, and being hold vpon the fauours which they haue receiued of their Prince, are more ready to deale vniustly and oppresse the people. V Who here also may not worthily maruell that noble men are so soone wearied with consulting of the estate and cōmon profit of þ subiects, but neuer satisfied with banquetting and following their delights? For you shall see many who not only feast certain daies, but spēd the whole time of their life in such excessse. And are not many priuate men also wont to do the like, who haue none other care whiles they liue, then to fill their paunch, and prouide for their belly? euen as they are said in this life to reioyce themselves, and to bee praised by their flatterers whē they make much of themselves. To them appertaineth the example of the wicked rich man, as though they did liue to eate and drinke, whereas we must eate and drinke to liue, and to be able to imploy our selues in our vocation. Especially Kings and their officers, who ought to be examples vnto their subiects of

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 11.7.7213  
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 Psal. 49. 18.  
 Luc. 15.

of all vertues. But what can be a right in so great wantonnesse and ryot? But so they live for the most part by the iust iudgment of God the revenger, because the people make themselves unworthy of good kings and wise counsellors. The other feast vnto which all the people that were in *Susa* were invited, lasted only seven dayes: yet was it long inough: for it is a great matter for a whole citie to give themselves to eating and drinking & to pastimes, seven daies together. So when great men begin once to give themselves vnto ryot, they are drowned in it more and more, desiring to gratifie all others in the like. This bidding of the whole people, doth testifie not onely the kings liberalitie & bounnie, but his humanitie & kindnesse, a vertue most becomming kings. And surely this gentlenes & curtesie is so much the more to be commended in so great a Monarch: because the greater part of Princes at this day, who yet are farre from the power of this King, do make no more account of their subiects then of base bondmen: so that they will scarcely suffer themselves to bee seene by them, vnlesse it be to be honoured.



yet might he better haue bestowed his liberalitie. For the bountie bestowed vpon the bellie, scarce lasteth any longer then whiles it is full: and that which is so prodigallie spent without choyse vpon all, binds no man: and is rather to bee accounted waste and prodigalitie, then liberalitie or beneficence. Yet is it not vnfitting the office of a King, or vnseemely for them sometime to exercise liberalitie towardes their subiects, not neglecting any: for they are Kings aswel of the small as of the great: and yn the baser sort especiallie are they to powre out the effects of their munificence and humanitie, euen as wee see the Sunne no lesse to sende out his rayes vpon the vile and abiect, then vpon the high and haucie. So the holy Kings of *Jude* in times past were liberall & bountifull toward the people, which were wont to keepe holyday and reioyce seuen daies togither during the feast of *Tabernacles*: but their ioy was consecrated vnto God, with a solemne remembraunce of his benefits. VVhen God then giues rest and abilitie, it is lawfull to banquet many dayes togither, so that all lasciuiousnes be banished, and God worshipped and acknowledged

as the author of that ioy and rest. So that  
if this King had regard of iustice, and did  
gouerne all things orderly and vprightly,  
this liberalitie was commendable. But if  
the people were oppressed, with tributes  
and exactions, or otherwise hardly deale  
withall, this was but a meane to comfort  
a while their miserie, and to haue them  
after more readie and obedient. Many  
Kings now a dayes thinke it sufficient to  
feede their people with faire words, which  
they are wont to publish in writing, that  
they may perswade the poor subiects, that  
they shal day studie for their profite  
wher as notwithstanding, this is for the  
most part their onely care, by what means  
to wring money from them, sucke out their  
wealch, and haue them obedient to euery  
command. So that those people are happie,  
which either are subiect to good kings,  
or without Kings enioy their owne libertie.  
And those Kings and Gouernours  
are also wise and happie, who haue learned  
to gouerne their people with iustice and  
clemencie, after the example of David,  
who excellently teacheth, that it is not  
enough for a King to winne his subiects  
with feastes, but that iustice and mercie are

X



required in him principally, for their government. Of which royal virtues see more in the three score and twelfth Psalm. And thus farre of the Kings feasts.

Let vs now come in like sort to the feast which the Queene *Vashti* made for the women: in the kings house also, but not in the Court, as did *Asterius*, because it becometh women rather to keep themselves within doores, then to go to banquetting abroad. Great was the authoritie of this queene *Vashti*, for that she was the daughter of *Cyrus*, the first Monarch of the Persians, and sister of *Cambyses*, who in Scripture is called *Azandaces*, and was the second emperor, and then wife of this *Asterius*, who was the thirde king of the Persian Monarchie. Shee therefore observed the like order in entertaining the women, as her husband did toward the men. Therefore as the king entertained his Princes which hee had called out of all his Empire with costly feasts, so the queene banquetted together with the Ladies which were come with their husbandes out of diuerse prouinces. And as he feasted the men that dwelt in *Susa*, seven dayes, so did the queene the women, that the ioy might be

be great on both partes. For otherwise it had beene but halfe a pleasure, if the men had feasted with the King, no regarde at all being had of the women. And further, it seemeth voyde of all equitie, that the men giuing themselves to their pleasures and feasting, shoulde leaue all the trouble and care vpon their wiues, to provide for their householde affaires. As the men therefore were diligent in deuising diuerse pastimes (as they are tearmed) to passe away, or that I may speake more trulie, to loose their time: the women no doubt were not behinde in inuention of sportes and toyes for their delights, seeing women are no lesse giuen to pleasure then men. But you will say why did they banquet apart from their husbandes, seeing nowe a dayes you shall not see any pleasant feasts, vnlesse the women be bidde together with the men, nay for the most part the banquettes are made for their sakes, as the manners of our age are most corrupt, and more bent to greater licentiousnesse? I say, that the custome of those tymes was more honest and modest, that in publique feastes the women shoulde not banquet with the men, that by this



meanes the occasion of many allurement  
 vnto wantonnesse might be cut off. For I  
 pray, what chastitie can remaine vntou-  
 ched in drunkennesse and intemperancie,  
 in filthie and wanton looks and speeches,  
 and oftentimes scarce honest touchings?  
 And woulde to God at this day this lawe  
 were in force amongst the nations which  
 delight so much to banquet with women,  
 and to spende the time in dauncing with  
 them. For howe vn honest a custome hath  
 preuailed amongst some, to carrie other  
 mens wiues and maidens to the Tauernes?  
 For how is it possible, that in the schooles  
 of all impudencie, such as the Tauerns are,  
 honestie & chastitie can be preserved, espe-  
 ciallie in that licence which every man tar-  
 keth vnto himselfe among the pottes:  
 when as euen in the most holie places, ma-  
 nie beholde both women and maydes  
 with vnebaule eyes? Is not this the full  
 measure of all mischief, that those who  
 are well heate with wine, should get them  
 to daunce, where nothing is heard but  
 wanton Musicke, nothing seene but moti-  
 ons full of intisement: where finallie there  
 is full libertie to doo and say what you  
 lyst? Farre away let all this shame-  
 lesnesse

*upon the Feast of Easter.*

lesse bee, and leaue learne at the least  
of the wretched heathen some lawes  
and examples of modestie: seeing espe-  
cially wee see the matter come to that im-  
pudencie, that the horse feedeth no longer  
the bitte, and there is now no more place  
left for admonitions or reproofes drawne  
out of the pure word of God.

Some things therefore are praise wor-  
thie in these feasts of *Assuerus*, to wit, his  
liberality towards his Nobles, his courtesie  
and gentlenesse towards all the people  
that dwelt at *Susa*; the law also set downe  
by him, that no man should be compelled  
to drinke without thirst, and lastly, that  
honest modest separation of the men from  
the women in banquetting. But there are  
again not a few things faultie in the same,  
to wit, that vaine ostentation of his glorie  
and riches, the great losse of time in fea-  
sting and banquetting, that over great wa-  
sting and spending of his goods, the too  
much carelesnesse of necessarie affayres,  
which could not but fall out to bee many,  
and of no small weight, within so large an  
Empire, in the space of sixe monthes: and  
especiallie the contempt of the true God,  
who is neither acknowledged nor wor-  
shipped



shipped by these feasters: and finally that  
 prophane mirth and gladness without  
 any note of holynesse, which oughte prin-  
 cipally to shine among the faithful so that  
 it was not much to be marvelled at, that  
 the issue was so mournfull, as God gran-  
 ting, we shall see. Wherefore if we desire  
 to haue our ioy and mirth continue long,  
 and haue it ioyned with Gods blessing,  
 let vs beginne with calling vpon his name,  
 and let vs end with the same. yea, let vs di-  
 rect the whole course of our life to his glo-  
 rie. For therefore are we borne, that when  
 we haue serued him in this world, and yeeb-  
 ded vnto him the glorie that is due, wee  
 may at the last be made partakers of euer-  
 lasting ioyes with him in heauen, Amen.

## THE THIRD SERMON.

*Of the mournfull ends of these feasts, from  
 verse 10. vnto 16.*

shipped

10. Upon

10. Upon the seventh day, when the king was merrie with wine, hee commended Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, & Abagtha, Zorbar, and Carcas; the seven Eunuchs that serued before the King Assuerus.

11 To bring Queene Vashti into the Kings presence, with the Crowne royal, that hee might shew the people and the Princes her beautie, because she was fayre to looke upon.

12 But when the Queene Vashti refused to come at the Kings word, which was brought vnto her by those Eunuchs, the King was verie angry, and his wrath kindled in him.

13 Therefore the King saide to the wise men, that knewe the times (for so the Kings businesse was wont to be propounded to all that knewe the law and iudgement.)

14 And to those that were next vnto him: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarsbish, Meroe, Marsena, and Memuchan,



*Menouchan the seven Princes of Persia and Media, which saw the Kings face, and sat the first in the Kingdome.*  
 15. *What shall wee doo to the Queene Vasthi, according to the law, because she did not obey the commandement of the King Assuerus, sent by the Eunuches?*

**H**itherto we haue seene the Court of *Assuerus*, and the whole citie of *Susa* full of ioy, the King feasting with his Princes, and all the people of *Susa*, the Queene *Vasthi* likewise banquetting with the women. Now let vs heare the holie Ghost reciting howe all this ioy ended in great sorrow, and that for light cause: to wit, on the one side, by reason of the Kings intemperancie, commanding the Queene to be brought into the kings presence, to boast of hir beauty in the sight of the people: on the other side, by reason of the Queenes disdainfulnesse refusing to come vnto the King, wherby the Kings wrath is kindled, and the banquets disturbed: the King consulting with his Nobles, and demanding their opinion what they thought was to bee doone to the Queene *Vasthi* for this

his stubbournesse. Like for the most part  
the ende of prophane and immoderate  
joy. So often times the ioyes of mortall  
men ende in sorrow, God accusing all in-  
temperancie, and ryot, and turning the  
passions and desires of great men, whose  
joyes no man dares to trouble, to bee the  
cause that they themselves trouble them-  
selves. Wherefore God forbidde that we  
should enuie at their prosperitie and de-  
lights, but rather reioyce with spirituall  
joy, being content with our owne estate.  
For it is better being content with a litle,  
to feele the fauour and blessing of God,  
then in the middest of carnall delights and  
pleasures, to feare his wrath. For diuers  
times it so falleth out, that when men most  
desire to take theyr delight, they receiue  
the message of death. As it was saide to that  
rich man which stirred vp his soule to liue  
at ease, *Eate, drinke, and take his pastime.* O  
foole, *this night will they fetch away thy soule  
from thee: then whose shall these things bee  
which thou hast provided?* And this in gene-  
rall is to be noted.

LUC. 12. 19.  
20.

Let vs now weigh euery thing seuerally.  
Vpon the seuenth day, which was the last  
of that feast which was made for v people,  
it



it is saide, that *The Kings beards was mar-  
rie with wine*, that is, that hee exceeded  
measure in drinking, and that there was in  
him an immodest mirth vnworthy p per-  
son of a king, his mind being thereby bent  
to speake and doo things scarce seemely,  
which is wont to happen to those who are  
ouer-ful of drinke. So that he transgressed  
that law which himself had made. For why  
had he forbidden that no man shuld com-  
pel another to drink, but because he might  
take away excesse and intemperancie? So  
many times Kings set downe good lawes,  
which shortly after they breake and take  
away, perswading themselves that it is vn-  
seemely for the Maiestie of a king to bee  
subiect to the lawes which hee hath made.  
Which thing also is often beate into their  
minds by flatterers: but in vaine do they  
publish good lawes, vnlesse by their owne  
example they procure them authoritie.  
And in lesser common-weales, good lawes  
made either against drunkennesse or anie  
other excesse, are vaine and voyde, vnlesse  
the magistrates also be subiect vnto them.  
For with what face can hee punish those  
that be drunke, when he himselfe is guiltie  
of the same offence. Neither are they  
heere

here to be hearkened vnto, who that they  
may make small fault of intemperancie in  
drinke, say, that it is a farre other matter to  
be merrie with wine, then to be drunke.  
For where the boundes of mediocritie are  
passed, and men wake hot with wine, it is a  
fault, so that although the vse of reason be  
not quite taken away with wine, nor all  
the senses astonished, as it cometh to passe  
in those wretches whom we may see stag-  
gering in the streets. Yet the effects of this  
halfe drunkenness, are farre more danger-  
ous, then those which and went to ac-  
companie that other great excessse, wher-  
by those who are drunke be quite benum-  
med, and as it were in a trance: for he that  
is merrie with the wine, if he be bent to an-  
ger, quickly picketh a quarrell: if hee bee  
prone to lust, breaks out soon into vnchast  
and filthie wordes and actions: if hee bee  
a pratler, vncouers euerie secret: if hee  
bee a tale carrier or backbiter, spares no  
mans good name, neyther abstaineth  
euen from contemning GOD, and trea-  
ding vnder foote all honestie, as the wise  
man notably teacheth in these wordes:  
*wine is a mocker, and strong drinke is raging.*  
What neede wee then set fayre colours

Prou. 20.1

on



Ila. 5. 20.

Vers. 11.

on vices: away with such patrons of most wicked causes. For against such men, I said pronounceth a curse, because they call euill good, and darkness light. Neither doth hee onely inueigh against those which fill their tables with vomit, which is the propertie of filthie dogs and beasts, but against them that continue sitting till the wine doe inflame them: for then is the minde readie bent to dare to do any thing.

So Asurnus when his minde was merrie with the wine, commaunderth those seuen Countie that serued him, to bring his wife in to the baquet, to shew to the people her beautie. Which before when his minde was quiet, hee did not, neither would haue done, vnlesse the force of the wine had takē away the vse of his reason, because it was repugnant to honestie, and the custome of that countrey: and besides, it must needs be a most vaine thing, and vnseeming the maiestie of so great a Prince, to shewe the beautie of his wife to all, and that among the cups. For this could not bee, but with great shame to the Queene, and not without allurements, and scant honest affecti-  
ons in the mindes of those who were no more temperate then the King. Moreo-  
uer,





But for the king and the queen, who  
though but had some when she was called,  
might not without cause have conceived  
indignation that she was brought forth  
slaying strokes into her subjects in the  
midst of her prison as we read that the wife  
of *Carden* king of *Lydia*, who when  
she perceived that she had been wronged  
by her husband to one of his familiar  
friends, lying hidden in a secret place, she  
never was known till she had revenged  
that injury done unto her, her husband be-  
ing slain by the hand of the same his friend.  
Finally as this king doth all things to the  
shew, so he hath his ministers most obedi-  
ent to follow his lusts: his Princes most de-  
voted for such waste, and his people prepared  
for his pleasures which he doth bid  
to. But the people, by not obeying  
deceyves all their expectation, which fact  
of hers sheweth her measure of mind, debba-  
nations and actions, by the fact of her, do con-  
demne of pride, subtillness, rashness, and  
folly: for which reason perhaps she was not  
altogether free for being she was a daugh-  
ter of *Cyrus* and sister of *Esther*, for he differ-  
eth, but she for want of *Esther*, it might be  
that in contempt of her husband she refused

d to come at his call. Yet neuertheless  
e might defende her selfe by no slender  
asons, no wit, that this commandment of  
o kinge was repugnant to the lawes of  
e Persians, contrary to common honestie  
e, and full of very euill examples neither  
uld it be but by this means the banquet of  
e ladies should be disturbed. And this is  
re especially to be commended, that she  
ould not make the wofuller bedurie, for  
ich at this day womē are so carefull, that  
ey desire this only, and thinks that it go-  
t not well with them, yviedesse they can  
he all men's eyes towards the. Notwith-  
nding, shee might haue taken middle  
use: which is in stead of so suddain a de-  
th, so to haue excused her selfe, that yet  
might haue shewed forth her obedien-  
ce, and haue gotten some of the men  
to approoue her excuse vnto the king.  
ich vnlesse the King would accept, it  
beene better, to haue obtyed him in a  
ter in it owne nature not stilly then by  
sing, to haue provoked the Kinges  
h agaynst her. And so to haue liued  
ter suspition of contempe & stubbornnes,  
ely in so noble an assembly, in whose  
the King was willing to shew his



power and magnificence; from which by  
this her rebellion she seemed much to de-  
tract. Hence let women learne not to  
provoke their husbandes, in those thinges  
which may bee done without offence  
to God: neither to make account of their  
stock, or beautie, or riches in their disgrace,  
neither forwardly to denie those thinges  
demuyng whereof the peate and quiet  
their house might bee disturbed. For  
though peradventure they cannot be done  
without some inconvienience, yet is it be-  
tter; if of their owne nature they bee  
evill, by obeying to nourish peace, than  
by resisting to breake it.

This repulse the King tooke in  
mullipart; and brake forth into exceeding  
great wrath; because by this meanes he  
thought himselfe to be despised, and light-  
ly regarded by his wife, and that it would  
bee a reproche unto him; especially in  
view of all the Princes of his kingdom.  
This so great heate of wrath, is a fruit-  
drunknesse; by which most especiall  
bankes are disturbed, and they are turned  
into forlowe: the king taking such indig-  
nation at the matter, and so much furth-  
er boylng with anger, by which the rest of

cheared and made merry. *Finis Solenne* Pro, 16, 20,  
*th, The King's wrath is the Messenger of*  
*death, or of some great calamitie vnto him,*  
*against who it is stirred: and therefore it be-*  
*cometh Kings, to be so much the more mode-*  
*rate in their anger: when as yet notwithstand-*  
*ing, the more was so much the more verferently*  
*gry, by how much greater is their power:*  
*standing their eye rather vpon their power,*  
*then vpon their dutie: whereby it cometh to*  
*pass, that they wil not suffer themselves to be*  
*remoued fro their affections, whether they*  
*be good or euil. But they should haue regard*  
*to right, and not to their power or affecti-*  
*ons. For therefore doo they raigne with*  
*great power, that they may establish*  
*justice, preserue good lawes, defende the*  
*inocent, punish the offenders, yeeld vn-*  
*reason, and compell others to obey if.*  
*that there is nothing that is more vn-*  
*reasonably for Kings, then to giue that place*  
*to passions, where reason ought to beate*  
*away. For those Subjects take from*  
*the patterne of good and honest life.*  
*And clemencie and mildnesse are the*  
*best ornaments of Kings: and a good*  
*the wisest counsellor that may bee: for*  
*that it is it selfe vniust, and the mother*



105, 01, 019

Iam. 1. 20

Ephes. 4. 27

of all iniquitie: and giueth many forme vnto  
 to a matter, but that which is the right: as  
 when we beholde any thing through a col-  
 oured Glasse. Therefore Saint Iames saith,  
*That the wrath of man doeth not fulfill the*  
*righteousnesse of God:* and Saint Paul warneth,  
*That hee that is writhed not his anger,*  
*giveth place to the Devil.* Now the wrath  
 of Priests is so much the more dangerous,  
 by howe much they are of greater might,  
 and there are none which dare reprehende  
 them, or oppose themselves against them,  
 no more then against a Lion, or any other  
 wilde beast. For which cause they shoulde  
 be like vnto the lawes wherof they are the  
 executours, and giue their iudgement of  
 euerie cause without passion. So should  
 Asuerus haue thought, that the queene  
 Vastri, wanted not sufficient excuse;  
 whereby she might approue her doing  
 vnto him, if she would not haue let loose  
 the reins to his anger. Such a moderation  
 is requited in all Iudges, and in all them  
 who haue any kind of power ouer others.  
 For vnto the minde be quiet and calme,  
 and seated in the seat of reason, it can not  
 but erre from the truth, and trouble both it  
 selfe and others.

In

In this rage the King desired the opinion of his Councillours, what they thinke may bee done to *Asfus*, by the lawe. It is prayse worthe, to aske the advice of wise men, and for an angrie man to bee willing to heare their opinion. But he is to bee feared, least hee kindle his Councillours with his over-great heate, because oftentimes wee see it happen, how everie one dooth frame his affections to the kings humour, and gives him counsaile according to his passion. The king therefore asketh those seven Councillours whose names here are recited, who sate & chiefest in the Kingdome of *Persia*, and *Media*, and sawe alwayes the Kings face: that is, were alwayes present with him to give him aduice in all hard and doubtfull cases, according to the manner and custome of the Countrey, by which it seemeth that the Kings were subiect to this counsaile. And surely that was an excellent order: even as in all Empires which are not tyrannicall, there are appoynted vnto Kings a certaine number of Councillours, without whose aduice they doe not any great matter.

But in procelle of time many kings gave



themselves such libertie, that they abuse  
 the name of their counsellors, to get the  
 greater authoritie to their owne wilfull  
 decrees. For so it cometh to passe, that  
 great power cannot long abide any peere.  
 Those seauen who heere are named, are ad-  
 dorned with excellent titles, *Of wise men,*  
*which know the times, and were skilfull in iu-*  
*stice and iudgement.* And truly these gifts  
 are verie requisite in Kings counsellors.  
 For by their wisdom and discrete coun-  
 saile, profitable lawes and statutes are  
 made, as wel in peace as in warre: by them  
 the whole kingdome is governed: they  
 dispose of all matters, both publique and  
 private. They create Magistrates and pub-  
 lique officers: they vnfolde difficulties a-  
 rising: they prevent confusions, or appease  
 them when they are sprung vpp: final-  
 ly, they repayre all losses, and preserve  
 the state of the Common-wealth. In all  
 which there is required great wisdom,  
 long experience, & exquisite knowledge  
 of the lawes. True wisdom containeth  
 the knowledge of things both diuine and  
 humane, and of their causes also. Now be-  
 cause these men had not attayned the  
 knowledge of the true God, they were

furnished onely with worldly wisdom, which yet is also the gift of God, and light which is bestowed by him vpon some for the gouernment of great Empires, whereby they may bee profitable to mankind, who otherwise would become the instruments of great confusion in the same. Next, the knowledge of the times is attributed vnto them, which containeth the skill in Histories, out of which may bee drawne the examples of memorable acts in all ages: to which must be adioyned experience, a surer instructor a great deale then Histories, which affoordeth sounde counsaile, according to the varietie and necessitie of occurrences. The knowledge also of Lawes is required: for out of them is to be gathered the deciding and defining of doubts proposed. Now that which is spoken of iudgements, is referred to þ knowledge of equitie, whereby in many things the rigour of law is moderated, and euerie action with great wisdom is weighed by the circumstances, that iudgement may be giuen in euerie case with equitie & moderation. VVherefore there is none other to be looked for, but the overthrow of those states, whose gouernment is managed by rash



craft counsellors, and without knowledge,  
 by young heads and without experience  
 (of which let those young Counsellors of  
 1. King. 12. Rehobai, be a memorable example vnto  
 10. vs) by those that are vnskilfull in the lawes,  
 and not carefull of equitie, but only withie  
 insubtile inuentions, whereby they frame  
 themselves to the will of their Prince. Fur-  
 thermore, these vertues are not sufficient  
 neither, vnlesse they be grounded on a good  
 and vpright conscience, which in euerie  
 matter shall loue the truth & right. For o-  
 therwise wisdom is turned into subtilty,  
 experience into deceit, the knowledg of  
 the law into craftie cauls, and equitie into a  
 malicious interpretation of the statutes. So  
 that great authoritie, & dignitie, & know-  
 ledge of the Law in a wicked man, is as a  
 sword in the hand of a mad mā. The lawes  
 are holy and pure, therefore they require a  
 pure & holy mind. Iudgements are of God,  
 and in his feare ought they to be admini-  
 stred: as Iasaphat warned his Iudges who  
 2. Chro. 19. he had appointed ouer the people: That  
 6. they should remember, that they executed not  
 the iudgements of man, but of the lord. Where-  
 fore, in the choise of counsellors & iudges,  
 there is not greater care to be had of their  
 industrie

industrie & knowledge, (which yet are required in them) then of their honestie and good conscience. Neither do wise & skilful counsellors any whit profita king, vnlesse they be also iust, & seuerer executors of the lawes. And finally, the wisdom of a good and discret prince, is not more knowne in any thing the in the choise of good counsellors, & in the approving of right & lawfull counsels. For to no purpose are good counsellors, vnlesse their counsels be obeyed. Behold here then at the last, the ende of laughter to be anger, behold in steed of a banquetting house, a iudgement hall: behold a feast turned into a consultation of a matter most intricate & of great moments seeing on the one side is proposed the question of the Queens person, her whole estate & dignity: on the other side, how the kings mind, though he were full of wine & wrath, may be satisfied, & how his magnificence & maiestie may be preserved whole and sound, which he himself could not sufficiently defend. So many times kings and princes stir vp troubles & confusio, which afterwards their counsellors must remedy. But we will defer this consultation of theirs vnto the next Sermon, & in the mean while let vs be warie by others mens examples:

let



let vs retaine temperance and sobrietie in  
our feasts: let vs layd all vanitie and vn-  
seemly ostentation: let vs bridle our wrath  
and the rage of our mindes: let vs seeke  
counsaile of wise men, but without passi-  
on, seeking rather right and equitie, then  
revenge: lette euery one according to his  
vocation, study to attaine true wisdom,  
and the knowledge of rights, lawes, and  
iudgement, & especially those, who ought  
to gouerne others with good counsaile, that  
in all our meetings a lawfull order may be  
observed, and the endes of them may bee  
happie, being ioynd with the glorie of  
God, to whom only be al honor, strength,  
and power, for euer more, Amen.

## THE FORTH SERMON.

The sentence of those seven wise men of the  
question proposed, what by law was to be done  
to the Queen Vagab, from the sixteenth  
verse to the end of the Chapter.

Then

16 Then saide Memuchan before the King, & the Princes, the Queene Vashti hath not onely done evil against the King, but against all the Princes, and against all the people that are in all the provinces of King Assuerus.

17 For when the Actes of the Queene shal come abroad amongst women, it shall come to passe, that they shall despise their husbands in their owne eyes, saying, The King Assuerus commanded the Queene Vashti to be brought into his presence: but she refused.

18 Also thus shal the Princesses of Persia and Medes this day say unto all the Kings Princes, when they heare of the Act of the Queene: thus shall there bee among vs much despisefulnesse and much hatred.

19 If it seme good unto the King, let a royall decree proceede from him: and let it be written among the Statutes of Persia,



Persia and Media, that it be not trans-  
gressed: that the Queen Rasti come  
more into the presence of King As-  
suerus, and let the King give her royall  
bestowments and her companions that shall be  
better then she.

20 So when the decree of the King shall  
be heard, which he shall publish throgh-  
out all his kingdomes, (though it bee  
in great) all the women shall give their  
husbands as they shall see good.

21 And when this saying pleased the  
king and the princes, the King did  
according to the sentence of Mene-  
dan.

22 For he sent letters into all the pro-  
vinces of the King into euery province  
according to the writing thereof, and  
to euery people after their language:

That euery man should beare rule in  
his own house: which euery officer  
published in the language of his people.

To the end that the lawe of the King  
might be fulfilled.

Rightly

**R**ightly doth the wiſe man ſay in the  
*Proverbs* as *Kings* have no counſails in the *Proverbs 11.14*

on wo people ſhall i do in the multitude of  
 good counſellers there is health. Rightly  
 alſo have the ancients ſaid, *That counſail is*  
*a ſacred holy thing.* For where all things are  
 diligently weighed and determind by delibe-  
 berate counſell, there right interpretations  
 are made, which bring both profit unto ab-  
 ſent men, & remedy for all miſchiefs. But there  
 is no good counſail without God. There-  
 fore Wiſdome cryeth out: *I have counſails* *Pro. 8.14*

*and equity, miſdom is mine, & a little after* 15.

*By our Kings ſigns, & rulers decree inſure.*  
 Therefore unleſſe God ſit i preſident in  
 the counſails of the wiſe, i they quickly  
 turne away from that which is right: where-  
 of this Hiſtorie witneſſeth vs ſufficient proofes.  
 In which ſo long beinge, yet how in wrath,  
 the madneſſe of his counſellors, what they thought  
 to be done, as the Queen ſhould, becauſe ſhe  
 had not the kings counſellors: ſome  
 of the counſellors pronouncing ſentence  
 the king without further enquiry, alſo ſome  
 & the reſt confirme w with their ſcſſes  
 that by & by they ſhould a decree be made,  
 whereby the Queen ſhould be deprived of  
 her dignitie, and ſo be divorced, leaſt that



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women should afterward become disobedient, or stubburne against their husbands, but every man should be ruler in his owne house. This ende of this decree was good and commendable, but the manner of the proceeding unlawfull; and no proportion or equality observed betweene the fault and the punishment: and therefore no regard had either of iustice, or of publique commoditie: which will better appear by the diligent consideration of every particular. First therefore let us weigh the question propounded by the King, and afterwards examine the sentence of *Mackin* one of the counsell.

Lo then this is the question proposed by the King to be deliberated of *whether shall be done according to the Law or the Queens Vassals because she fulfilled her the commandment of the King Assuredly by the Law.* A plaine proposition, and as it seemeth not vnjust for he requires to have her iudged by the law. But was a matter of so great moment to be referred to the counsell when they had well drunk or whilst the king was yet inflamed with wine, and incensed with anger? For as yet his wrath was not allayed, as appeareth by the decree

WOMEN

crec

cles of the council, and those things which  
expresly are spoken in the beginning of  
the next Chapter. Besides, is not a mat-  
ter of so great weight over-hastily hand-  
led, when he wil have sentence given even  
in their banquet? Moreover, what iustice  
was it to give iudgement against so noble a  
personage, the cause being neuer heard?  
seeing there is none so vile or abiect, who  
can bee condemned in the equitie of any  
lawe, either diuine or humane, who neither  
he hath pleaded his cause, neither is lawfull-  
ly conuict: Last of all, even by the lawe of  
nations, every man is to be heard in his own  
cause, before he be condemned. First ther-  
fore they should haue enquired whether  
the matter were worthie to be called into  
consultation: which if it should be found  
so to bee, then both the day should haue  
bene assigned, and a conuenient place ap-  
pointed, and the partie accused, called: if  
this had bene done, that ioyfull meeting of  
theirs had not bene turned into so wooll a  
tragedie. He desireth indeed that y<sup>e</sup> queene  
V<sup>irginia</sup> should be iudged according to the  
lawes, but the contempt of lawes in this  
action, sufficiently sheweth that he maketh  
mention of the lawes, onely for shewes  
F sake.



fake. So for the most part, Kings are vvont to talke of lawes & statutes, as though they would submit themselves vnto them: but indeede they meane to haue their will to stand for reason, and their passion to possesse the place of iudgement. So euerie one that goeth to lavv, pretendeth law & equitie, vvhich the greater part of them haue an hundreth times broken, or at the least turned to their own commodity. So those who sit in the place of gouernment, wil seeme to speake nothing but lawe and statutes, which notwithstanding for the most part they wrest and alter as they list. Notwithstanding this saying of the Kings, if it bee rightly vnderstood, prescribeth a rule, whereby all controuerfies as wel ciuil as Ecclesiastical, may bee compounded. For vvhereas vve liue so heere vppon this earth, by reason of the infirmitie of man, that it cannot be but that strife vvil sometime arise, they must all bee iudged according to the lavve.

VVherefore it behooueth, that in iudgement the Iudges haue the lavves alvvayes before theyr eyes, and diligently enquire of the cause and euerie circumstance thereof, as *Iob* protesteth of himselfe, that

that hee was wont to *Examine diligently*  
*the cause which hee did not knowe.* There- *Iob. 29. 10*  
fore Paul willeth *Timothie* to giue et. *1. Tim. 4. 13*  
*tendence to the reading of the Scriptures,* & *3. 21*  
*which were able to make him wise,* and gi- *Deut. 17. 19*  
ue him warning, *That hee eucline not*  
*to one part more then another in iudge-*  
*ment.* Therefore were the Kings of *Is-*  
*raell* commanded to cause to be written, and to  
read the law of God at the eyes of their liues,  
out of which they might learn iudgement  
and iustice. For wherehence doo wrong  
iudgements arise, but out of the ignorance  
of the law, or of a malicious wandering  
from the same?

VVe learne besides out of this fact  
of *Asinervus*, that no man ought to bee  
iudge in his owne cause, but leane it to  
the iudgement of others, how great soeuer  
his owne authoritie bee. But indeed if *As-*  
*inervus* would haue sentence giuen accor-  
ding to the law of the question propoun-  
ded, this knot must first be dissolued, whe-  
ther at this time the queene were rightly  
called by *Asinervus*, to shewe her beautie  
to the guests, or no? Nowe euery man  
bootheth and flattereth himself, & mighty  
men will not haue their actions enquired



of by any, as though they could not slide, erre, or be deceived: in which opinion they are also confirmed by the impudencie of flatterers. Of which thing, let that courtly flatterer be a witnesse, who said vnto *Alexander* the great, that Iustice was the inseparable companion of Kings thrones, that they might not erre in their iudgements. And so the flatterers of our time say, Kings can doo nothing vnuly: the Popes holinesse cannot erre: finally, if euerie one might be iudge in his owne cause, would he not say the like? And thus farre of the question propounded by the King.

Let vs now then heare the sentence of *Mennuchan*, one of the counsell, who was last recited, but speaketh first: either because hee was the yongest, or else the King commaunded him first to shewe his opinion. His sentence is contained in five verses: and in the three first, hee iudgeth that the Queene hath offended as well against the Kings maiestie, as also by her euil example, which she hath shewed to all women, and in this part hee is somewhat long: in the two other verses which are the 19. and 20, hee setteth downe the punishment fit for such a fact, & proueth his sentence by the profit

profit which shall come thereby to euerie  
 m<sup>a</sup>. Whose sentence the king alloweth of,  
 & the rest of counsell confirm, verse 11. and  
 in the last verse, followeth the sudden exe-  
 cution of that sentence. Lo then, this is his  
 iudgement of the fact of Q. Vashti: *That*  
*the Queens Vashti hath not onely done euil a-*  
*gainst the King, but against all the Princes,*  
*and against all the people that are in all the pro-*  
*uinces of the King Assuerus:* but that shee  
 hath done euil against the King, he proo-  
 ueth by no reason, vvhich yet principally  
 he should haue done: onely he taketh for  
 confessed, and as a maxime vvithout all con-  
 sideration, that they do euil vvich are not  
 obedient to the Kings vvord, vvherein he  
 erreth greuously: for that vvich the king  
 commaundes is not by and by the rule of  
 iustice: and then although the queene had  
 defended in this point, yet not prouident  
 of a peruerse minde, but moved there-  
 unto by feare, or bashfulness, or some o-  
 ther euil and honest cause. Moreover, he  
 saith not, that it is reason the queene should  
 be heard, and so in this action hee maketh  
 the kings fault his owne. Yet notwithstanding  
 great is his liberalitie in speech: which  
 becometh counsellors which follow  
 the



70. *The fourth Sermon*

the right way, but is most dangerous in them who do erre from the same. A counsellor therefore ought to bee most free in pronouncing sentence, but he must also be a wise discernor of equitie, least inclining to the mightier part, he oppresse the weaker with his iudgement: which thing we here see to be done by this *Memuchan*, who giueth seuerer sentence with rigor against the queen, though absent, framing it according to the lust of this angrie king, and inclining in that his sentence which seemeth to be so freely vttered, rather vnto the one part then vnto the other. It is then a vertue of a good counsellor, freely and without respect of persons, to declare his sentence, & to iudge of euery matter as it is, but he must also be wise and wary, least he erre in the fact, and make it more hainous then it is indeede.

Furthermore, *Memuchan* confirmeth the other part of his sentence, to wit, that the queen had don euil against al the princes, & against al the people of the whole Empire, with this reason, *That the queenes fault shall come abroad to al women, whereof they will take occasion to despise their husbands, & so the princesses of Persia and Media, who haue seene and heard the fact of the queene, shall so answer*

Swere to all the Princes of the King, whereby  
 ſhall ariſe much deſpightfulneſſe & wrath de-  
 ſpightfulnes and contempt of y<sup>e</sup> women to-  
 wards their husbands, & wrath of the men  
 againſt their wives, not enduring ſuch con-  
 tempt. He therefore weigheth y<sup>e</sup> conſequent,  
 what will follow of this fact, & the euill ex-  
 ample giue to y<sup>e</sup> womē by the queen. And  
 without doubt he, y<sup>e</sup> wil iudge right, muſt  
 weigh diligently al circumſtances, & name-  
 ly what will be the conſequent of any euill  
 act, eſpecially if it be done by the who are  
 in high authoritie & eſtimation. For their  
 euill deedes do more hurt by reaſon of the  
 example, the if they were otherwiſe con-  
 ſidered by theſelues. But we muſt diligently  
 take great care to diſtinguiſh an offence  
 taken, fro an offence giue, leaſt y<sup>e</sup> we ſa-  
 ly impute vnto him who hath committed a  
 fault, whatſoener peruerſe & malicious me  
 wil gather thereof. For there may be ſome  
 ſpecial conſideration of a mans fact, which  
 others know not, & therefore ſhuld it be an  
 aduiſed part to go about to follow it.  
 Moreover, when men are to giue thei<sup>r</sup>  
 iudgement of thoſe controuerſies which  
 ariſe betweene ſuch as are ioyned with ſo  
 neare bonds, as is matrimonie, eſpecially  
 among Princes, all things are not to bee



interpreted in the worse part. Neither must wee (as the Proverb is) cast oyle into the fire to increase the flame, but all waies and meanes must be sought of reconciliation and renning of loue: yet so, that the euill committed be not thereby altogether covered. Last of all, we must prudently discern betweene a light fault and an haynous offence. This deniall of the Queene was indeede a fault, but it was not any haynous offence, as if shee had beene guiltie of adulterie or some other ynchaſte act, or had conspired against the Kings maiestie, or had practised any rebellion or alteration of the Kings state. Neither had those offences beene to be punished only with diuorce, but with greater punishments, even with death. I confesse that a fault may be either lesser or greater, according to the manners or customes of people or regions. In other countreyes this refusal would not haue beene so hardly taken, yflesse perhaps it had beene ioyned with exceeding great contempt. But among the Medes & Persians, ouer whom their kings challenge an absolute power, this fault was the greater, though not therefore to bee chaunged into so haynous a

crime

crime, nor so farre to be vrged, that the in-  
conuenience should so hardly be scanned,  
which therof might follow among others.

By this speech also of *Mennuchan*, we gather  
that in *Persia* the husbands had obtained  
great authoritie ouer their wiues, & were  
willing to retaine it: and also that the wo-  
men would gladly shake off this yoke of  
hard bondage: which mischiefe *Mennu-*  
*chan* here seeketh in time to preuent.

VVee learne also out of his wordes,  
that to pronounce right iudgement of any  
matter, it is requisite that all things bee  
weighed what may followe vppon any  
thing, that the evils which may ensue bee  
prevented, but yet by such conuenient re-  
medies as shall not be more dangerous then  
the evils which be feared. By the way al-  
so this is to be noted, that there is nothing  
that so easily stirreth vp strife between the  
married, as when the wife despiseth and  
conteneth her husband. And these things  
touching the sentence of *Mennuchan* con-  
cerning the fact of the Queene *Vashti*.

There followeth now what punishment  
is fit for such a fact: to wit, *Let it please the*  
*king, that a royal decree proceed from him, and*  
*let it be written among the statutes of Persia*  
*and*



and Media, that it be not transgressed. That  
the queene Vashti come no more into the kings  
presence, and let the King giue her kingdom  
vnto her neighbor, which shall be better then  
shee. This is a most grieuous punishment,  
whether it be considered in it selfe, or in  
the manner of the publishing. For he will  
haue her to be diuorced with shame & re-  
proach, and her princely dignitie to be ta-  
ken from her, as being rebellious against  
her king and husband, & another to be ap-  
poynted in her place, whereby her grieffe  
might be increased with greater indigna-  
tion. As touching the maner, there must a  
decree go forth from the king, which shall  
be published through all prouinces, and  
layde yppe in record among the statutes,  
and not to bee called backe againe. In  
which poynt *Memuchan* seemes to pro-  
uide for his owne safetie, for hee might  
chance to heare of it afterward, if the de-  
cree might be recalled. This sentence see-  
meth iust vnto many, & such as the pride  
and stubburnnes of the queene *Vashti* did  
well deserue. But to him that shall weigh  
the matter in equall ballance, it may well  
appear, that y<sup>e</sup> punishment was far greater  
then the offence, and so more seuerer then  
right.

right. For simple disobedience is not a sufficient cause to dissolve the band of matrimonie, especially it being grounded on a reasonable shew, if any list to bee the queenes patrone in the cause. As the King of *Inda*, did indeede depose his mother *Maacha* from governing the people, but it was for her horrible idolatrie. I confesse that the people of the East partes did neuer greatly esteeme of marriage, having ioyned vnto themselves many wiues at once: yea, euen of those who were neere of blood vnto them, and vsing also for verie light occasions to diuorce them againe. Neither ought this to seeme straunge, when euen among the people of G O D, these vices founde place. But these things are not to bee measured by theyr abuse, but by the truth and the auncient lawe of nature. Besides, the deposing of a personage of so great Maiestie, especially ioyned with so great reproach and perpetuall note of infamie, is most commonly more bitter then death it selfe. But far be it from me that I shuld go about to search out the iudgments of God, which seeing they are alwayes holy and iust,



Luc. 3. 32.

Gen. 37.

we must confesse that the Queene *Visitation* was for iust cause throwne downe by him, which thing the blessed virgin doth in her song confesse, that God hath put downe the mightie from their seates, and exalted them of low degree. But those things which God by his secret decree doth bring to passe, and those which men decree, do many degrees differ the one from the other, wherein men may easily passe their boundes, and deale uniuersally, though God alwayes deale iustlie. This is plaine vnto vs in the example of *Ioseph*, when God iustly humbleth and tryeth, when his brethren traitorously, and with more then barbarous treacherie do sell him. Wherefore the punishment of *Kassari*, if they had observed the proportion between the fault and the punishment, might haue bene gentler, neither needed they to haue dealt with her by extreame lawe, which often times is extreame iniurie. By this let the mightie learne, not to trust in their dignitie, which is so brittle: for those falls are most dangerous, which are from high places. And any man may easily coniecture how great the sorrow of this great Ladie was, being cast downe so sodainly from so high degree of honour.

That

To That custome of the Persians to make lawes that shoulde not bee repealed, is most commendable, so that care be taken, that fewe lawes be made, and that those bee iust, and diligently weighed with deliberate counsell before they be confirmed and published. For it availeth little or nothing to have good lawes made, vntlesse they be kept in force, and diligently obserued: and to set forth statutes which in short time shall be repealed, is to lay them open to contempt, and cause them to bee despised: and it taketh much away from the authoritie of lawes, when men see that they must either be taken away againe, or at the least somewhat chaunged in them. Yet notwithstanding, there bee some things which may & ought to be altered with the time, seeing as men are variable & changeable, so also are their lawes and affayres: and some thing may bee fit and necessarie for one time, which is not so conuenient at another.

It is further to be noted, that then common-weales are best gouerned, and their estate preserved, when punishments are ordained for those that offend, and contrariwise, those that deserue well of the common-



common-wealth, are by the authoritie of the lawes sufficiently rewarded: which two if they be wanting, all things will be full of troubles and confusion. And thus much hitherto of the punishment to be inflicted vpon the queene *Vashti*.

He confirms his sentence afterward with the profite that will follow: to wit, that all women afterwardees yeelde the greater honour to their husbands. Hee seemeth indeed to iudge aright: but hee seeth not on the other side, that many husbands beeing by this meanes made more insolent, will abuse their authoritie, and chaunge it into tyrannie: and that many women may easily bee compelled vnto many things scarce honest, as oft as their husbandes shall require: and that by this meanes manie marriages by diuorce shall bee broken: so that this wise councellor seemeth but with one eie to haue looked into this fact. But when as he dealeth about a decree which should be irreuocable, he was to haue had a more diligent care of all things that might folow, least he set downe a remedie more dangerous then the disease. But thus we see it for the most part commeth to passe with those who only haue regard of their own comof  
dine,

life, and so are scarce indifferent iudges of  
others. Lawes ought to be equall, and not  
whiles they prouide for one, oppresse an o-  
ther, as this counseller here doth. Yet this  
we gather out of his speech, that it is a law  
set downe by God himselfe, and as it were  
written with his finger in the hearts of all  
men: vsed in all nations, and confirmed by  
publique lawes, *That women obey their hus-*  
*bands.* But againe on the other side, *Huf-*  
*bands must loue their wives, and beare with*  
*them as with the weaker vessels: so that wiues*  
*must be subiect vnto their husbands, but*  
*not as slaues.*

Ephes. 5. 22

23

1. Pet. 3. 1. 7.

This sentence of *Memuchan*, the King  
himselfe doth allow, and the Councillors  
without any gain-saying do confirme. Nei-  
ther was this maruaile in the King, who  
had before giuen place in himselfe, vnto  
so bad Councillours, Wine and Wrath.  
Yet when the question vvas of the putting  
away of his vvife, and that vvith disho-  
ur, should hee not yet at the least haue  
thought, vvhat other men vvoulde haue  
suggested of him in this case? should not his  
Councell haue exhorted him to weigh the  
matter earnestly, and euery circumstance  
thereof? Marke therefore I beseech you,  
how



how great the force of wrath is when it is  
 once kindled, though for a light matter  
 given for denying her presence to the King  
 when he called her: and howe readie coun-  
 counsell is to helpe it forward, that so sud-  
 dainly the sacred bande of matrimony  
 should be broken: and the loue so solemnly  
 lie professed, violated. Neither was it seem-  
 ly that the rest of the Councell should be  
 so readie to confirme so seuerer a sentence  
 with their consent: but you shall find verie  
 few which dare speak against a king, who  
 he alloweth any sentence. It therefore ma-  
 nie times little auayleth Kings to bee at-  
 tended with a great number of Councel-  
 lours, but onelie for greater pompe and  
 charge. Those therefore whose will stand  
 death for reason, are wont to vse but one  
 two as witnessles of their secrets. But yet  
 notwithstanding, that remaineth vnmou-  
 able which in the beginning we set downe  
 that safetie consisteth in the multitude of  
 Councellours, so that it be vnderstoode  
 good and wise Councillors, which hand  
 and gouerne their affaires aright, and  
 iustice.

The sentence giuen, is more speedily put  
 in execution, the Edicts and Proclamations

ons beeing sent by the king into all  
prouinces, according to euery ones lan-  
guage: the conclusion whereof was, *that*  
*every man should beare rule in his owne house.*  
An vpright edict verily, so that it be mo-  
derated, according as wee are taught by  
the spirit of God, and this lawfull rule of  
the husband, end not in tyrannie and op-  
pression. VVee see then, that all thinges  
are done heere hastily, which is vnseemely  
for them, who purpose to establish  
immoueable and firme lawes, and are to  
determine of the weightie affaires, which  
appertaine to so great an Empire. And  
his notwithstanding wee see to happen  
many times, euen to wise Counsellours,  
led by his exceeding great wisdom,  
drawing out of their counsels, that which  
shall bee profitable for his Church: and as  
were, bringing light out of darkenesse,  
meth the sudden motions and rages of  
the most mightie *Monarches* and rulers  
of the world, to his owne glorie.

Loe then what was the end of the feasts  
of *Asuernus*, abounding with excesse and  
superfluitie. Hee gaue the first place to  
ambition, wherewith beeing moued, hee  
appointed these feasts: the second, to de-  
lights,



lights and delicacies, giving himselfe to wine, and a yaine desire to shew forth his wifes beautie: who refusing so to do: hee thirdly is stirred vp to wrath and indignation, and diuorceth his wife, and proclaimeth his owne shame through his whole kingdome: and thus he exchangeth his delight & ioy, for sorrowful care & sad pensiuenesse, hauing lost his lawfull companion at bed and boorde: but yet the greatest losse and disgrace redoundeth to the Queene *Vashti*. Behold heere, I say, the issue of worldly delights & banquets ouerflowing with ryot and excessse.

Let vs therefore bee content with an holie mirth, framed according vnto gods word: Let vs so vse wealth and prosperitie, that wee faint not in aduersitie: but vsing both estates holilie and vprightly wee may referre them to his glorie, who doth distribute them according as it seemeth best vnto himselfe,

through Iesus Christ, to  
 who be glorie, honour,  
 and power, for euer.  
 Amen.

upon the booke of Ester.

33

## THE V. SERMON.

pon what occasion Ester was brought into the Kings house for women, under the keeping of Hegai, the keeper of the maidens. From the 1. verse of the 2. Chapter, to the ninth.

### CHAP. II.

after these thinges, when the wrath of King Assuerus was appeased, hee remembered Vashsti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

VVherefore the Kings servants that ministred unto him, sayde: Let them seeke for the King, beautifull young Virgins.

And let the King appoint Officers throughout all the Prouinces of his kingdome, who shall gather all the beautifull young Virgins, unto Susa, the Cittie royall, into the house of the women, under the hand of Hegai, the



Kings Eunuch, the keeper of the women: who shal giue them their things for purification.

4. And the maide that shall please the King, let her raigne in the steed of Vashti. And this pleased the King, and hee did so.

5. In the Cittie royall of Susa, there was a Iewe, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Iair, the sonne of Shimei, the sonne of Kish, the Beniamite.

6. Which had beene carried away from Ierusalem, with the captiuitie, that was carried away with Ieconiah, king of Iuda; whome Nebuchad-nezar King of Babylon carried away.

7. And hee nourished Hadassa: that is, Ester, his Vncles daughter, for that shee had neither Father nor Mother: and the maide was faire and beautiful to looke on, whom after the death of her father and mother, Mordecai tooke for his owne daughter.

8. It came to passe therefore, when by the publishing

vpont the booke of Ester. 85

publishing of the Kings commaundement and decree, there were many maides brought together to Susa, the Cittie royall, vnder the hand of Hegai: Ester was brought also vnto the kings house, vnder the hand of Hegai, the keeper of the women.

9. Vpon whom the maide pleased well, & she found fauour in his sight: therefore he caused her things for purification to be giuen her speedily, and her portions, and seuen comely maides to bee giuen her out of the kings house, and he gaue vnto her and to her maides, the best place in the house of the women.

Of the most sumptuous and most riotous banquets of Asuerus, & of his fond desires, there hath bene none other end (as wee haue heard) but sorrow and sadnesse, of which the greatest part did light on the Queene *Vashti*, who was diuorced from her husband, and deprived of her royall dignitie.

Now is declared what afterwards folowed,  
G. and



and howe it came to passe, that the King going about to allay the want he found of Qu. *Vashti*, when by the counsel of his Courtiers, hee had gathered many virgins out of his whole Empire, that out of them he might chuse one, whome he might take to succeed *Vashti*: *Ester* was preferred to the Crowne. Afterwarde how *Murdochai*, by reuealing the conspiracie of certaine Courtiers, prepared himselfe a way to highest honours. And this is the summe of this Chapter. There are at this present two things to be weighed by vs: First the counsell which was giuen to the King, to gather together so many Virgines out of his whole Kingdome, out of which hee might chuse one for his Qu. which beeing approued by the king, is straightwaies executed: which thinges are contained in the foure first verses. Next, who and of what estate *Ester* was, who among the rest was brought into the kings house, where the maidens were gathered together for the King, which is described from the fifth to the ninth verse.

The reason of entrance into this counsell, is declared in the I. verse: to witte,

After

After these things, when the wrath of King Assuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. The Author maketh not mention what time passed from the reiecting of Vashti, but it is likely that it was some two yeares space: for she was divorced about the latter ende of the third yeare of the raigne of Assuerus, and Ester succeeded in her place, in the 7. yeare: so there are 4. yeares that passed betwene those thinges, of which, if one be allowed to the gathering together of the Virgines, the other in preparing them, according to that which is described in the 12. verse, there remaine two yeares in which the wrath of king Assuerus lasted. Now when his wrath was appeased, hee remembered the fact of the Queene Vashti, and the decree that was made against her. Although it be not expressly said, that he did repent it, yet may it easily be gathered, because it is not without cause said, That his wrath was appeased. For hee might call to minde her beantie, and her noble race descending from Cyrus, hee might acknowledge hee had done her wrong, in that he reiect-  
ed her for so light a fault. So then the de-



tree made against her, was in the heate of his rage, of which the king beginneth now to repent. This for the most part commeth to passe in those things which are done in a rage: For whē they are done without aduise, they leaue nought behind them but repentance.

But what is now to be done? there remaineth no remedie, the law is made, yea it cannot bee recalled: and so both the custome of the Countrie, and his owne estimation, will not permit him to alter any thing in the decree. Wherefore Princes and men of high estate, who are subject to anger, which is so much the more dangerous, by how much the greater their power is, must learne from hence, that they must bridle and restraine their fury, whelke they will do many things vnjustly; whereby they shall incurre great infamie, which yet notwithstanding they cannot by any meanes remedie.

By this also we may marke, that every passiō is asswaged and mitigated by time: and reason, who was as it were, throwne downe from her throne, receiueth againe her authoritie; but often times too late, when things are brought into so bad a

case

case, that there remaineth no remedie. Wherefore, those who contend with perpetual hatred, and deadly scende, do sufficientlie testifie, that reason is banished out of their mindes, and are more hard against the Lords reproofes, then any stone against the drops, wherewith by often falling they are pearced. Besides, it had not been hard to haue found out a medicine for that mischiefe, vnlesse by euill counsell the way had beene stopped, which is euident in this action. For the counsell that was giuen to *Asuerus*, did more and more alienate his mind from *Vashti*. Now although God did turne this counsell to the good of *Ester*, and the Church, that letteth not, but that it may bee many wayes faultie, as by the carefull sifting of it, we shall easilie perceiue.

The counsell that is giuen by the yong men the Kings seruants, is this: *Let there bee sought for the King, beautiful young Virgines, and let the King appoint Officers for this purpose, in all the Provinces of his kingdom, which shall gather all the young Virgines vnto Susa, the Citie royall, into the house of women, vnder the hand of Hegai, who shall giue them their ornaments, and the*  
*Virgin*



*Virgin that pleaseth the Kings eye, let her be  
Queene in steede of Vashti.* This coun-

sell is giuen to the King, by young Coun-  
sellours: neither are the seuen Princes the  
ordinarie Counsellours (of whome was  
spoke in this former Chapter) here called  
vnto counsell. The counsell of young  
mē in weightry affaires, is worthily suspec-  
ted: for when as they haue neither wise-  
dome nor experience, they do most times  
rather giue that counsell which lust and  
passion do suggest, then that which rea-  
son should affoorde: Of which thing, the  
young Counsellours of Rehoboam doo  
make prooffe. These also doo frame their  
sentence according to the lust of an ambi-  
tious and riotous King, neither haue they  
any regard of right or honestie. For what  
need was there, I pray, to gather togi-  
ther so many Virgins out of all the Pro-  
vinces of the kingdome, when in the cit-  
tie of Sasa onely, there were ynough and  
ynough, to be found? To what end serued  
so many Officers, which should take the  
daughters out of their Parents armes, euē  
against their wil? was it iustice so by force  
to take them, in despite of their Parents?  
But these men will haue all thinges to be  
lawfull

1. Kings. 12.  
16.

awfull for Kings: Nay, they say, it is an honour for those parents, whose daughters they vouchsafe to take for the kings Concubines, or rather Bondslaves. Howbeit, let it bee, that all men doo consent with willing mindes unto the Princes lusts, it is notwithstanding a matter of very bad example, out of which there cannot chuse but growe great confusion in all states. For, O good God how great the licentiousnesse, how great the infamie of those who are set about such matters? How many things doo they, quite besides all honestie and seemlinesse, that they may bee thought to bee good procurers of the lustes and pleasures of their Lordes? What then doo ye thinke was done in this case? perhaps more then thousand Virgins thus taken. For kings haue neuer more ready and willing Officers, then when they commaunde those things, which make for their pleasures, or the setting forth of their pride, though sometimes they bee scarce honest: nay sometimes cruell. What other thing then maye you thinke came to passe by this counsell, but the opening of a wide doore to all dissolutenesse, and intempe-



temperancie: and the preparing of matter to make a man effeminate & wanton. And in chusing of a wife for a King forsooth, they onely haue regarde of beautie, which many times is voide of vertue and chastitie: Whereby it cometh to passe, that all those who onely respect beautie, are most deceived of their expectation, and receive at last fit reward for their lustes.

The kings house whereinto they were brought, what other was it, but a perpetuall prison? and though wee graunt it were honourable or to bee esteemed yet was it a prison, and vnto diuers of them a perpetuall widdowhood, shadowed vnder the cloake of Matrimonic, vnlesse they pleased the king where hee had deflowred them. The preparation, of which in the 12. verse, what other was it, but a bastarding of the naturall beautie? But kings which take wines, not by their owne, but by other mens eyes, haue many times those whom it pleaseth other and not themselves: and delight rather in those who are painted and set out by Art, then in true and naturall beautie. And besides

what

what neede I pray, so many maidens  
to become most wretched for ones  
ake onely; which should attaine the  
oyall seate? And yet this sentence  
pleased the king, and hee commanded  
should most speedily bee put in exe-  
cution: whom it had better becomed  
to haue carefully weighed this matter,  
that therein, neither force nor iniurie,  
should bee offered to any; and to haue  
prouided, that neither he should marry  
a wife against her parents or her owne  
will, or which himselfe might not loue  
and like of. But those counsells chiefly  
please Princes, whereby there is an ea-  
sier way made to their delights, & their  
power increased. Therefore the King  
is glad, that by this meanes, all prouin-  
ces should haue experience, that he had  
power ouer the goods and persons of  
his subiects, nothing regarding whether  
by right or wrong. Hee is fedde then  
with hope of enioying those Virgines,  
who should most excell in comelinesse  
and beautie, throughout his whole  
Realmes: hee forefaineth vnto himselfe,  
all manner of delightes and pleasures,  
little caring for publike honestie, or the  
affaires



1. Kings. 11  
3.

affaires of the Common-wealth. For what earnest matter can hee thinke of, who collecteth in his minde none other thing the to attaine a peece of most exact beautie & fauor, passing al others in comelinesse: But of such Gouvernours the world is worthie, who onely studie for their owne profite and pleasure: because all men for the most part, are carried headlong with immoderate pleasures, preferring tyrannie, before iust government. Furthermore, it is little to bee marueiled at, that a Prince ignorant of the true religion, did yeelde so much to his pleasures in gathering together so many women: When *Solomon*, whose wisdom is reported to be so great, and his kingdome far lesse, did get vnto him a thousand Wives, whereof seuen hundred were Noble women, and three hundred Concubins, & that against the expresse commandement of God: which turned to his ouerthrowe. So then it often cometh to passe, that many times Princes haue not the best counsell giuen them; many times they aske not counsell of the wisest: because they are farre more desirous

firow of setting forth their power and magnificence, then of wisdom: and more carefull of their pleasures, then of the common profite. But you will say, this counsell was for the good and profite of the Church: I confesse it, yet is it no whitte the lesse faultie. For God knoweth howe to bring light out of darkenesse, though it remaine alwaies darkenesse: and hee draweth good forth of euill, the euill still continuing euill. This counsell then, though in it selfe euill, and the multitude of wiues, or rather fornications, which heere are aduised, beeing also euill: yet God thence tooke an occasion to lift vpp Ester into so high a place of dignitie, dooing those things well and wisely, which by men were done rashly, and inconsiderately. So great is the goodnesse & wisdom of our God, turning all things to the health and commoditie of his. And thus farre of the counsell and edict, for the gathering of so many Virgins into the Kings house of women.

We are now to see, who and of what estate Ester was, which by force of this

...de-



96.      *The fifth Sermon*

decree, was brought to the hande of *Hegai*, the Kings Eunuch, keeper of the women, who were gathered together for the King. *Mardocheus*, who by kindred, was her Cousen german, & had taken her for his daughter, who also afterwarde did direct her with his counsel, for deliuerance of the Church, is described in two verses, both in respect of his Stocke, and of his state. Therefore hee is said to bee *A man of Benjamin*, descending from *Kish*, the father of *Saul*, hauing *Iairus* for his father, *Shimei*, his Grand-father, and *Kish*, his great Grand-father. But it is likely, that in this Cenealogie, all the Ancestors of *Mardocheus*, vntill *Kish*, bee not reckoned. For from the time that *Saul* the sonne of *Kish* began to raigne, vnto the captiuitie, which happened vnder *Iechonia*, there passed more then foure hundreth yeares. It is also to be noted, that when these thinges came to passe, *Mardocheus* was growen to great yeares, for from that captiuitie vnder *Iechonia*, vnto the time which heere is described, there passed fourescore yeares: so that it must needs bee, that *Mardocheus*

was carried with his father *Iaius* into captiuitie. For God doth many times for the good of his Church, giue long life & olde yeares vnto diuers, aboue the ordinarie course of nature, as wee read of *Leuiada* the high Priest, that hee reached to the age of an hundred and thirtie yeares. In the meane while, wee see what for the most part is the condition of the children of God in this world, that they bee dispersed into diuers parts of the world, and carried captiues into a straunge countrie, neither kings, nor mightie, nor learned men excepted. For there were carried into captiuitie with *Iechonia*, tenn thousande captiues out of *Iuda* and *Beniamin*, all being men of might, and all the workemen, and cunning men of the kingdome, as appeareth 2. *King.* 24. 14. And this is our comfort & consolation in flights and banishments, that our God doth relieue our exile, by giuing places of abode vnder Christian Princes, & giueth vs leaue to exercise all holy libertie both of body and conscience vnder their dominion. And such was *Mardocheus* estate.

It is said afterward that the father of *Ester* was the vnckle of *Mardocheus*, & he is

H

named



named after in the 15. verse, *Abihail*, but shee remained an Orphane both by father and mother, being borne in the captiuitie, for otherwise shee must bee of necessitie fourescore yeare olde. Shee being in this case, *Mardocheus* takes her as his daughter, and doth the dutie of a father towards her: wherein he shewes himselfe to bee a good kinsman and faithful friend of the dead, hauing so great care of their daughter left in such a case. Her fauour and beautie is commended, because it was the means which got the kings grace, and made a way for her to the royall dignitie. So beautie doth helpe those that feare God to obtaine honour, but vnto others it is oftentimes the instrument of their destruction, as vnto *Queene Vashti*. Those therefore who are more faire then others, haue not whereof to bee proude: but there is rather giuen vnto them greater occasion of humilitie & modestie, that they may employ the gifts giuen them by God, to his honour and glorie.

In the meane while, marke what is the state sometime of those Virgines which feare God, though borne of honest and noble Parents. *Ester* is a captiue,

time, a stranger, without father or mother, and poore, whose onely treasure and riches is godlinesse, and her onely father and defendor the Lord.

By which example wee are taught, that Parents ought not to bee so carefull and greedie for their children, that they do any thing in getting or keeping of wealth for them, which shall bee against their conscience: when as *Godlinesse content with it owne is great riches*, and there can no better inheri-  
tance be left by Parents to their children then it.

Therefore they ought to bestowe diligent care in bringing them vp, & cast off all other care, and ouergreat carke of the things that appertaine to this life, and not to carrie with them when they die, that sorrowe and carefulnesse which many doo, vnlesse they haue provided for their children according to their minde.

For then are they well provided for, when they haue God for their father, whose blessings are on a thousand generations, towards them that feare him: so that without doubt,

I. Tim. 4.

I.



Num. 29.  
12.

hee will raise vp some faithful *Mardocheus*, who shall take care of the children of Gods faithfull seruants. Heere also all men are taught by the example of *Mardocheus*, to haue a peculiar care of Orphanes, and namely of their kindred and affinitie; and especially of maidens, who for their chastitie are in greatest daunger. And this carefulnesse *Job* protesteth of himselfe. Wherefore it is an intollerable shame, that stonie hearted and more then barbarous men, who abound in riches & wealth, do notwithstanding so little loue and regard euen their owne kindred, that they suffer the many times to be brought vnto extreame beggerie & penurie. Neyther may they lawfully stick at their losse, & pretend that for an excuse, whē *Mardocheus* though he were a banished man and a captiue, did not yet cast off the care of his cosin germane, but brought her vp with him in godlinesse and religion, the fruites whereof did at the last shew forth themselves to the good and profit of the whole Church. Thus haue you what *Ester* was.

There remaineth now to bee set forth, how shee was brought into the house of  
women,

*upon the booke of Ester.* 101

women, where the virgins were gathered together for the King, vnder the hand of *Hegai*, as in the fift & sixt verses is declared. The authour doth not expresse whether it were done with *Mardocheus* consent and hers, or no: it is most likely that there was not any ones consent looked for: and that they should be in great perill whosoever should refuse: but seeing they had much profited in godlinesse, it cannot be doubted but that they were driven into great distresse: and that they did wrestle with many feares: When on the one side, *Mardocheus* beholdeth all the good hope hee had of his pupile in a moment to perish: and on the other side, *Ester* feareth the present daunger of being reiected after the King had once known her. For what reason should she haue to hope that shee should bee preferred before all the virgines in the whole Empire, and be exalted into the dignitie royall? Besides, how do you thinke that shee was vexed in mind and conscience, when she saw that shee must bee ioyned to an Infidell and vncircumcised, though a King? and that by this meanes shee was separated and in a manner rent from the people



of God? Yea, but some will say, shee should rather haue suffered any shame, & offered her selfe vnto a thousand deaths, then consent vnto this, to be the Concubine of an Infidell. But what could shee doo? a greater force tooke her away: and peraduenture there was in this fact some special & extraordinarie motion of gods spirit, who is wont so to leade his through the thickest darknesse of this world. And if wee should say, that in her and *Mar- docheus* there were some sparkes of infirmitie, we should not speak of any strange and vnsuall matter euen in the saints of God: which yet notwithstanding we may not imitate. For the infirmities of the saints are set downe vnto vs in the holy scriptures, that wee should wonder at and learne to extoll the goodnesse of god towards them, who turneth their infirmities to their good; not that we should follow them. I would not therefore suffer my self to be perswaded by any reasons, much lesse wold I perswade any, or yeeld consent, that a christian maiden should be ioyned to the great Turke, though it were in marriage. But whatsoever happened in this case, I doubt not but *Ester* had many thoughts

thoughtes running in her minde, when shee sawe shee should bee taken from the hand of *Mardocheus*, by whom so fatherly shee had bene brought vp, and delivered to an Infidell: and but that both of them with many grones and sighes did desire the helpe, counsell, and protection of God. And so ought wee to do in all our difficulties and distresses, certainly perswading our selues, that God will lighten our darknesse, as wee are taught *Psal.* 18. and 112. When as wee relie on him alone, and dedicate our selues with an vpright heart to set forth and celebrate his glorie: euen as the Lord is said to direct the steppes of his, and when they fall, to lift them vp, that they be not vtterly troden vnder foote. Let vs therefore wholly commit our selues vnto him, for hee hath a care of vs, whom hee leadeth into all blessednesse in Christ Iesus his sonne, to whom be glorie for euer. *Amen.*

H 4 THE



## THE SIXT SERMON.

*The preferment and exaltation of Ester  
to the royall dignitie: from verse 9.  
unto 18. of the second Chapter.*

9. And the maide pleased him, and she found  
fauour in his sight: therefore hee gaue her  
speedily the things for her purification, and  
her portions, and seuen comely maides out  
of the Kings house, and he appointed en-  
to her and her maides the best place in the  
house of the women.

10. Ester had not shewed her people and her  
kindred: for Mordecai had charged her,  
that she should not tell it.

11. But Mordecai walked euery day before  
the court of the womens house, to know if  
Ester did well, and what should bee done  
with her.

12 And when the course of euery maide came  
to go in unto King Assuerus, after she had  
been twelue moneths after the manner of  
women (for so were the daies of their pu-  
rification accomplished, fixe moneths with  
oyle of myrrhe, and fixe months with sweet  
odours,

odours, and in the purifying of women.)

13 Then when euery maide came vnto the King, what soeuer shee required was giuen her, to goe with her out of the womens house vnto the kings house.

14 In the euening shee went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, vnder the hand of Shaafligaz the Kings Eunuch which kept the concubines: shee came in to the King no more, unless she pleased the king, and that shee were called by name.

15 Now when the course of Ester the daughter of Abihail the vncle of Mordecai (which had taken her as his owne daughter) came, that she should go into the king, shee desired nothing, but what Hegai the Kings Eunuch the keeper of the women, sayde: And Ester found fauor in the sight of all them that looked vpon her.

16 So Ester was taken vnto king Assuerus, into his house royall in the tenth moneth, which is the moneth Tebeth, in the seventh year of his raigne.

17 And the king loued Ester aboue all the women, and shee found grace and fauor in his sight, more then all the other virgins: So that hee set the crown of the kingdome,

upon



upon her head, and made her *Queene* in  
steade of *Vashti*.

**A**mongst the most wonderful workes  
of God in the ordering and gover-  
ning of mens actions, those are most  
worthie attent consideration, when hee  
throweth downe the mightie, and exal-  
teth those of low estate, as in their *Himnes*

*I. Sam. 2. 8.* Anna the mother of *Samuell*, & the *Bles-*  
*sed virgin Marie* do most sweetly record.

*Luke. I. 52.* Nay, the very *Heathen* did obserue and  
note them, and haue deliuered many of

those alterations in their writings: not at-  
tributing them indeed vnto God, as they  
ought, but vnto *Fortune*, which also at  
this day wee see to be done by the igno-  
rant. But in the holy scriptures, many

such excellent & memorable examples  
are proposed vnto vs, & the meanes dili-  
gently obserued which God did vse in  
bringing lowe the one, and lifting vp the

*Gen. 41.* other; whereby the order and course of  
his prouidence might the better be per-  
ceiued. Which is most euident in the *Hi-*

*Exod. 12. 10.* storie of *Iosaph*, who was exalted to so

*Dan. 2. 48* great dignitie in *Aegypt*, that hee was  
next vnto the king; and of *Moses*, who

*Exod. 6. 28.* was

was brought vp in *Pharaohs* Court, and called the son of *Pharaohs* daughter: and of *Daniell*, who was so great in fauor and authoritie in *Babylon*. Amongst whom *Ester*, whose Historie wee expound, deserueth not the last place, beeing lifted vp to the crowne royall, from a lowe and base estate: in which Historie there is particularly expressed by the holy Ghost, the meanes which God vsed in exalting her to so high an estate, for the good of his Church.

The reiection of *Vashti* was as it were the beginning and entrance into it, then the counsell giuen to the king to gather together the fairest virgines out of all his Empire, was a furtherance of it, though in it selfe it were neither good nor honest; besides, her beautie and fauour was added, whereby the kings officers were moued to bring her into the house of the women vnder the hand of *Hegai*: al which wee haue hitherto declared.

Nowe there are other meanes set downe vnto vs, to wit, that she pleased *Hegai*, and vsed wisedome and discretion in her behauiour by the counsell and aduice of *Mardocheau*:  
and



and that although shee were compelled to vse perfumes: and those other prescribed paintings, yet shee sought not any thing whereby shee might procure the kings fauour, vnto whom notwithstanding shee was most acceptable, as also vnto all that saw her, insomuch that by an hidden yet heavenly motion, the Kings loue rested on her, and hee set the royall crowne vpon her head. Thus we see how God did liue vp this base captiue maiden, and that vsing but small and contemptible meanes, whereby wee might the better learne to acknowledge all to come from his grace and mercie. But wee shall knowe these things better, by the diligent exposition of euery particular.

First therefore, *Shee is said to please Hecai, and to finde fauour in his sight*, neither came that to passe as thogh she were the most beautifull, most noble, most industrious, or most skilfull in courtlike matters, but it came of God, who gouerneth and hath in his hand the hearts of men, & turneth them euery way, according to his pleasure, that hee may procure the loue of all towards them whom hee will exalt, that is, towards those that feare him.

him. So that to purchase the good wils of men, wee need no cunning, or wicked, or vnlawfull meanes, as did *Absolom*, who did steale the hearts of the people: but 2.Sam.15 wee must feare and honour God, who 6. honoreth those of whom hee is honoured: wee 1.Sam.2. must follow the way of integritie and humilitie, which is the true & only way to get the good wil of al mē, vnto which are altogether contrarie, pride, arrogancie, & insolencie: Whosoever therefore desire to bee beloued of others, let them looke into this exāple, that by it they may learne to bee carefull of vprightnesse and holynesse. The good will of *Hegai* is accompanied with an especiall care of his, in yeelding vnto her things fit for women and her portions, that is, giuing vnto her whatsoeuer was requisite eyther for apparel or diet; besides a traine of seuen maids out of the kings house, who should attend her, and finally the best and most commodious place in the house of women.

So the feare of God bringeth all commodities to the faithful, as the Prophet at large in the 112. *Psalm* doth particularly describe it. Neither is it without cause that



*Psal.* 34  
12.

*2 Tim.* 2. 2

*Mat.* 6. 33.

*2 Tim.* 6. 1

that *David* biddeth him that is desirous of long life, and to bee furnished plentifully with all things which are truly good, to fear God, and doo iniurie to no man. Therefore also the sonne of God exhorteth his to seeke the kingdome of heauen and the righteousness thereof, promising that all other things besides shall be cast vpon them. Yet wee say not that godlines doth alwaies bring to those that followe it, such abundance of honours and goods, but that it is enough if that wee learne by it, to bee content with that measure which God doth measure vnto euery one, which is more abundant vnto vs, then all the superfluities of the wicked.

The wisdom and silence of *Ester* are afterward commended vnto vs, to wit, that shee shewed neither her people, nor her kindred, as shee was commaunded to doo by *Mardocheus*.

The cause of this forbidding is not expressed: but it is not hard to gesse, that it was done because of that contempt and reproach wherewith the Iewes were oppressed: as well because they were captiues, as also because they followed a di-

uers

ners & contrarie religion from all others. But this inhibition is to be vnderstoode, to stretch so farre forth, vntill shee were demaunded by those who had lawful power and authoritie ouer her. For otherwise vnlesse she did declare it vnto them when she should be examined, truly she had not only lied, but also secretly denied her religion. It is indeed a high poynt of wisdom, not rashly to bewray that which may breede vs hatred, enuie, and contempt: but againe to denie the truth, & to dissemble what religion we professe when we are demaunded, is a treacherie, which redoundeth to the dishonour of God. Therefore when the time required it, neither *Ester* nor *Mardocheus* did hide their religion or their people. Wherefore this place helpeth not those, who by this example would shape a defence for Idolatrie: for the sentence of the son of God remaineth firm & vnremoued: *Whosoener Mark. 8.*  
*shall be ashamed of me, & of my words before 38.*  
*men, I wil also be ashamed of him before god my father.* But a man may demaund it not without cause, how she could eonceale her people & her kindred? For wheras *Mardocheus* from whom she was taken, was knowne to be a Iewe, and she did abstain  
from



from meates forbidden in Gods lawe, it seemeth that she did sufficiently bewray her selfe. For if any thinke that shee did eate of vncleane meates, or violate the Saboth, hee may also say, that shee cast away all godlinesse: forasmuch as wee see, that the faithfull would rather indure any torment, then taste swines flesh: wherof there is a most notable example in the Historie of the *Macabees*. But I answer, that neither the officers who gathered the maides together, nor *Hegai*, vnder whose hand they were kept, enquired verily carefully after these things, but were onely content that shee was beautifull, which they chiefly sought after. I adde, that whereas *Ester* was in great fauor with *Hegai*, shee therefore obtained greater libertie to liue according to the lawe of God, and yet not bee espied. So is God wont to watch ouer his, that they runne not into any hatred or contempt, and yet notwithstanding preferue their consciences safe. And thus farre of *Esters* wisdom. That peculiar care which *Mardocheus* had alwaies of her, is now after this declared: *That every day he walked before the court of the house of women, that hee might*

*misfide bibell bus, and lead on to learne*

doorne of Esters prosperitie, & what became  
of her. For when as it was not lawfull for  
him to enter into the womens house, he  
diligently sought all occasion to talke  
with any, by whom he might bee certifi-  
ed concerning her. Neither was it with-  
out cause that hee tooke so great care for  
her: for hee knewe that the manners of  
young maidens easily would be corrup-  
ted with courtly delights, and soone for-  
get their former education: as daily expe-  
rience doth teach, that there is scarce  
one of an 100, who may chance not to be  
infected with the vices of the Court, in  
which hee shall be brought vp. For there  
be fewe *Iosephs*, few *Moses*, fewe *Daniels*,  
who can bee conuersant in the Courts of  
Infidels and Idolaters without some spot  
or fault, when as there raigneth such a  
bundance of all manner of corruptions,  
even in the Courts of those who professe  
themselves to be Christians. Therefore  
not without cause did *Mardocheus* so  
fear least *Ester* should be forgetfull of the  
doctrine of the lawe, and of that good  
bringing vp and instruction which shee  
had receiued from him. He was careful  
also for her health: and what should be-



come of her, fearing least if by chaunce her people, and the religion which shee did professe should be known, she should be reiected with contempt and reproach, or euill entreated and dealt with. Here all Parents, Tutors and Guardians, by the example of *Mardocheus* are warned & put in minde of their dutie towards those pupils whom God hath committed vnto them, not onely as long as they be vnder their charge, but also after they be set at libertie: to wit, that they alwaies watch ouer them, and whether they be remoued farre off, or be neare vnto them, to helpe forward as much as in them lieth, their health and profite.

*Mardocheus* might seeme in his owne conceite, excellently to haue discharged his dutie, and might saye as many in our time are wont, what should I haue any further care of *Esther*, seeing shee is so well provided for? I had care of her as long as shee was vnder my charge: I haue done what I could for her, I thinke I haue well-performed my dutie: shee is now in better case then I am, why should I trouble my selfe any further

further

But true loue is not so quenched in the mindes of good kinsmen, it rather raiseth vp new sparkles; whereby they may be stirred vp to beare an especiall care towards them, to whom they are bound in kindred or alliance; and to giue the good counsell and aduice.

But you shall see in these daies; that the greater part of me rather studie this onely, how they may be rid of the charge of their children or pupils, or poore kindred, by what meanes soeuer it be; that beeing once freed, they may euer after altogether cast away that care. And let this suffice to be spoken of *Mardocheus* care.

Here is now described in the three verses following, the manner of the preparation, too too labour some and sumptuous, and delicate, whereby the maidens were annoynted with oyles and sweete perfumes, before they were brought vnto the king: Next, in what manner they went in vnto the king: and thirdly, howe they had an other house appointed for them, after they had bene one night with the king.

I 2

These



These are the tokens of extreame rō-  
 coulneffe, and extreame wantonneffe, in  
 this wanton and effeminate Infidell king  
 whereby we may learne, that those whom  
 the spirit of holinesse and regeneration  
 doth not gouerne, are made the bond  
 slaues of all manner most villayned lusts  
 thinking that all things are lawfull for  
 them by reason of their dignitie. This  
 king then being a seruānt vnto lust, will  
 not touch a mīde, though faire & cleane,  
 vnlesse shee haue beene first whole fixe  
 moneths besmeered, and as it were soaked  
 with oyle of myrrhe, and then other fixe  
 moneths annoynted, perfumed, and as it  
 were seasoned with all manner of sweete  
 spices. So nothing that is naturall can  
 content these vassals of most prodigious  
 lusts, but onely painting and art doth  
 please them. Now how troublesome  
 thinke you was this vnto *Isther*, who had  
 bene brought vp in all godlinesse, fruga-  
 lity and modestie, to be tattered and soaked  
 a whole yeare in such wantonneffe and  
 riot? I say, but some will say, ought shee  
 to endure it? Certes, seeing shee was a  
 modest and godly maiden, I doubt not  
 but shee was ashamed of these delicacies  
 and

and allurements. But what should shee  
do: whether shee would or no; euen with  
extream griefe shee was compelled vnto  
it. The vse indeed of oyle and per-  
fumes is not simply to be condemned, but  
excesse in the vse of them, and a corrupt  
affection abusing the to an other end then  
they ought. Nevertheless, in a matter  
wherein her conscience was not wound-  
ded, and which she sought not by am-  
bition, she might with a good conscience  
yeeld to necessity, and frame her self vn-  
to the time: keeping notwithstanding in  
her heart her former loue of simplicitie &  
purtie, those most fire vertues for faithfull  
virgines. Wherefore these thinge do no-  
thing helpe those women, who infected  
with the poyson of pride & ambition, ne-  
uer make an ende of painting and colou-  
ring themselves, that they may turne all  
mens eyes towards them, and procure  
euery ones fauor. Behold yet further here  
how great the flatterie is which they liue  
in, that liue in the courts of wicked kings.  
Neither must we labor greatly to excuse  
Ester, as though euery way she were free  
fro all vice. For she might also be touched  
with some weaknesse, euen as wee see the



most holy to haue wrestled with many infirmities: so that in *Ester*, the mercie & goodnesse of the Lord doth so much the more shine, in that he vse d these means to procure fauour for *Ester* with the king. These maidens thus besmeered and besmoked, were lead to the King, euery one in her course: and there was giuen vnto her whatsoever shee would desire, eyther for company or apparrell, when shee went in vnto the king: so that there was no spare made of any thing, to satisfie the insatiable lust of this impure and lecherous king: and it is very likely, that euery maid affecting that high place of royall dignitie, did shewe their skill in deuising of ornaments and fashions, whereby shee might allure the king to like of her. When they had passed the night with the king, they were brought into another house of Concubines, vnder the hand of *Shasbaze*, in which they were holden in perpetuall prison, vnlesse the king being delighted in any one of them, did by name call for her.

There is heere described vnto vs such an horrible pollution and defiling of matrimonie, which we ought most earnestly to hate and abhorre: And considering how

how great the darknesse was wherein those miserable blinde wretches did walke, or rather wander, wee ought to make so much the greater account of that light which wee haue receiued from God: and to vse holy and honourable marriage in most holy and pure manner. For if we shall do otherwise, wee are readie to fall into most certaine and vnauoydable danger, yea though we passed *Salomon* in wisdom: and we drawe downe vpon vs the iust furie of Gods wrath, as he did by the multitude of womē, & abuse of holy matrimonie. And these things are to be obserued in these 3. verses, 12, 13, and 14. that we may not stay any longer in searching out the filth of this king who knew not the true God: who yet notwithstanding hath at this day too many folowers (euē amōg those who professe the knowledge of God) of this his vnchast and intemperate beastlines. Now let vs see how *Ester* behaued her self, whē her turn came to go in vnto y<sup>e</sup> king: & how god got her so great fauor with the king, that she was preferred before al the other maidēs. It is said, *That she demāded nothing, but was cōtēt with those things which Hezai did prescribe:*



euē by this testifying that she was drawn against her will, and with a discontented minde, vnto this impure and vncircumcised king: that she would not go about to purchase his fauour by any cunning, but that she gaue ouer her selfe wholly to the prouidence and guard of the Lord, that shee might be preserved vndefiled. And this indeede she did obtaine by Gods singular bountie and clemencie, that she was not cast out into the number of Concubines, but ioyned in lawfull matrimome to the king. For by how much the more shee neglected all painting and beautie gotten by art, by so much was shee the more accepted and fauoured of all that looked on her: so much can Gods fauour, so much can modestie and simplicitie do, in procuring the good will of all men towards vs. Those therefore that feare god, do receiue this reward at his hand, of their vertue and integritie, a reward I say and not a gift, but yet of his meer grace and liberalitie, who is debtor vnto none.

The time when shee was brought vn. to the king is expresly noted, both that the credite of the Historie maye bee the greater, and the peculiar care which God hath

hath ouer his Church, the more knowne  
and famous: for by this meanes hee pro-  
vided aforehand for the necessities ther-  
of, when it should be in daunger, before  
the perill drewe neare. For *Hamans* con-  
spiracie happened in the beginning of  
the twelfth yeare of *Assuerus*: and *Ester* is  
receiued into fauor and the royall estate,  
about the ende of the seuenth yeare, in  
the month *Tebeth*, which for the greater  
part answereth to our *December*. Behold  
then with what fauor God embraced his  
handmaide: to wit, that *Assuerus* beeing  
moued with a secret instinct, loued *Ester*  
*about all the women, and she found grace and*  
*fauour in his sight, more then all the other*  
*virgines*. Neyther was this by reason that  
shee was the most noble, the most wittie,  
the most expert in courtly affaires: for  
where, when, how should shee learne  
them, seeing she was brought vp with her  
cosin *Mardocheus* in all feare and humi-  
litie? And besides, it is very likely that  
many other were her equals, or did passe  
her in beautie: but the secret fauour of  
God can doo more then all these things.  
By this wee may see how truly it was said  
by the wise man; *The hearts of Kings are* Pro. 21.1



**Pro. 21. 1.** *in the hands of God, & he turneth the at his pleasure:* and that the fauour and grace which we receiue of great men, floweth from the especiall grace of God, least any man should ascribe it vnto himselfe, as though he were of himselfe worthie of such loue. And truly this is altogether admirable, that so lustful a king could so suddenly settle his affection vpon a base vnkowne maide, so that he did prefer her before all the rest, and ioyning her vnto him in marriage, made her Queene. Let maidens then learne from hence, which wish to haue good husbandes, and wiues who desire to bee beloued of their husbandes, with what ornaments they ought principally to desire to be decked, to wit, with the fauour of God, which they shall procure, if with humilitie and modestie they serue him. Behold then *Ester*, of a miserable captiue made a Queene, the wife and spouse of the greatest Monarch in the world. Prophane men would say, that good Fortune laughed on her, but we do herein acknowledge the singular prouidence of God, lifting vp the base & abiect, as oft as it semeth good vnto him. So was *Ioseph* promoted in *Aegypt*, not by fortune

fortune or chance, but by the certain coun-  
 sel of god, providing before hand for his  
 Church, that it might have a remedie pre-  
 pared in *Aegypt*, against that great famine  
 which the was in had, & yther it might be  
 receiued & cherished for a while: which  
*Ioseph* himself doth acknowledge, & tell  
 his brethre: & is expressly noted in *ps* 105.  
*Psa.* Soe *Moses* was brought vp in *Pharaos*  
 court, that being furnished with all y wisdom  
 of the *Aegyptians*, he might be of the  
 greater authoritie & grace, when the time  
 of the deliuerance of the people to bee  
 wrought by him should come. The same  
 diuine providence did lift vp *Daniel* in  
*Babylon*, not onely as an excellent Pro-  
 phet, but also as a protector and defendor  
 of the Church. Thus doth God lift vp  
 the base & abiect, that they may say with  
*David*, O Lord my heart is not haughtie,  
 neither are mine eyes loftie: on the contra- *Psa.* 131.  
 rie, hee keepeth downe the proude, and I.  
 throweth downe the loftie countenance.  
 And this the *Blessed virgin* singeth in her *Luk.* 1.48  
*Himne*, saying: God hath regarded the base  
 estate of his handmaid: not that any ones  
 humilitie or basenesse doth deserue to be  
 exalted by God; but that God wil there-  
 by shew forth the treasures of his mercie.

And



And if the proude for a time sit in high estate, it is for their greater mischief, for that they shall leaue behind them an vnhappie memorie of their wickednesse.

Neither are all the base and contemptible people lifted vp by God, into some high degree of dignitie in this world: but it is enough and that abundantly for them, that they are by the grace of god made in Christ Iesus the sonnes of God, kings & Priests: which dignitie is greater & more precious then any dominion, euen ouer all the kingdomes of the world. Neither did the chiefe honour of *Ester* consist in her dignitie royall, or marriage with *Ahasuerus*, but in her excellent faith and assurance of euermlasting life. For if these things had bene wanting in her, surely the greatness & dignitie of her kingdom could not haue kept her from eternall misery & malediction. Furthermore, the examples of such dignitie and extraordinarie preheminnence, are most rare among the faithfull, least any should think that their felicitie and happinesse were placed in such things: neuerthelesse, in those few examples which are, god will haue vs behold, as in a glasse, his most wise prouidence.

dence; to whom it is most easie to exalt  
whom pleaseth him, into most high dig-  
nitie: least any should here saie, as ig-  
norant men are wont, any turning & yn-  
constant wheele of Fortune. But let vs  
imprint this in our memoric, that the way  
wherby we attaine to that glorie, which is  
proper to the sonnes of God, is humilitie,  
integritie, and modestie, which are the  
gifts of God, whereby we may learne to  
know, that the beginning, middle and  
end of our saluation, doth flow from the  
onely meere grace of God, through the  
merit of Christ Iesus our Lord, to whom  
bee all glorie, praise and dominion for e-  
uer. Amen.

## THE SEVENTH

### Sermon.

The banquet made for Esters sake,  
to the solemnization of her marriage;  
her dutifulnesse towards Mardoche-  
us; and the worthy fact of Mardo-  
cheus in disclosing of the conspiracie  
against the King. From verse 18. vn-  
to the end of the second Chapter.

18. After



18. Afterward the king made a great feast vnto al his Princes & his seruants, which was the feast of Ester, and gaue freedome vnto the Prouinces, and gaue gifts according to the power of a king.

19. And when the virgines were gathered together the second time, then Mordecái sate in the kings gate.

20. Ester had not yet shewed her kindred, nor other people, as Mordecái had charged her: for Ester did after the word of Mordecái, as when shee was nourished with him.

21. In those daies when Mordecái sate in the kings gate, two of the kings Eunnuches, Bigthan and Teresh, which kept the doore, were wroth, and sought to laye hand on the king Assuerus.

22. And the thing was knowne to Mordecái, and he tolde it vnto Queene Ester, and Ester certified the king therof in Mordecáies name.

23. And when inquisition was made, it was found so: therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the booke of the Chronicles before the king.

**I**T commeth to passe for the most part,  
that those who are exalted out of a base  
and abiect place, into any higher de-  
gree of honor, are either open vnto the bi-  
ting of the enuious, or waxing insolent,  
forget their dutie: or are subiect to some  
suddaine alteration. For I know not how  
almost al me enuie at y dignitie of those  
that suddainly arise. Besides, in so happie  
a successe it is very hard to keep measure,  
but that pride commonly doth accompa-  
nie such, after which followeth some vn-  
happie calamitie and ouerthrow. For a  
man shal more hardly set sure footing vp-  
pon the toppe of an hill, or in a steepe  
downfall, then in a lowe and plaine place.  
So that those who on the suddaine are lif-  
ted vp into any height of dignitie with-  
out enuie, and doo therein behaue them-  
selues modestly, not proudly, and stand  
firme against euery tempest, do find a pe-  
culiar fauor at Gods hand: by whose help  
they are safe from the venime of enuie &  
malice: and from the insolencie of a  
proude heart, and so at the last from de-  
struction and shamefull change.  
This fauour wee see heere that  
Ester hath obtained from G O D,  
whose



whose so suddaine alteration of her estate  
into so high a dignitie, was pleasant, and  
acceptable without enuie, by that libera-  
lity which king *Ahasuerus* shewed for her  
sake towards his subiects. And because  
God in his secret providence, made that  
her kindred and nation was not knowne,  
the also is not forgetfull of her dutie, but  
obeyeth *Mardocheus*, as before when she  
was brought vp with him; and so God  
maketh a way for those honours which  
were after to bee given to *Mardocheus*,  
whereby her dignitie may bee more and  
more confirmed. So God giueth all things  
vnto his as it were sleeping. Which doc-  
trine is most profitable for vs, whereby  
wee may learne to rest vpon the Lord  
with all our heart, & not trust to our own  
wisdom, but to acknowledge his provi-  
dence in all our waies, that so hee may  
continually gouerne our steppes, as the  
wise man speaketh. *Prov. 3. 6* I will  
trust in the Lord, now then weigh this peculiar  
care of God ouer *Ester*. *Ahasuerus* for her  
sake prouideth a great feast, as well to ce-  
lebrate her marriage, as to confirme vnto  
her the royall dignitie, and ad shewe  
her forth vnto his people, that she might

*Psal. 127*  
2.

known to whom he therefore gave  
 such immunity and rest from their taxes  
 and tributes, and gave gifts according to  
 the power of a king. This feast is not so  
 reproved as the former, of which we  
 make in the first Chapter; for there is in  
 this feast, both a good end, and an honest  
 occasion. For this hath bene in all ages a  
 most commendable custome, in the hon-  
 our of marriage, to celebrate a feast, to  
 honour the kinfolke, friends, and neigh-  
 ours, in so much that those who were  
 rich and wealthy, did continue the feast  
 seven daies, as may easily be gathered out  
 of the 29. of Gen. when Lea was given to  
 Jacob to wife, and out of the 14. of Judg.  
 which there is mention of the marri-  
 age of Samson. Now these feasts were so  
 much more carefully kept by the of old  
 men in honour of marriage, because mar-  
 riages were not openly blessed in the  
 Church of God, as afterward among  
 Christians it was accustomed to be done.  
 So that with what honour the king en-  
 taineth Ester, than by a solemn feast  
 which he made to his Princes, and ser-  
 vants, he might proclaim his Queens  
 before them all, & would make it known  
 that



that she was his spouse and wife: of which feast also the end was quiet & happie. He had indeed many women besides her, as the corrupt manners of that age did beare, but in a far lower degree, for which cause also they were called concubines. But this fact was especially praise worthie in this feast, because he gaue great occasion vnto his subiects of publike ioy, in that he granted them release fro their burthen and payments. It is not declared, whether that immunitie was granted for one y ear or moe: but it is likely that it was granted at the least for a y ear: wherefore the people being set free from this burthen, had iust cause of gladnesse, and to reioyce that *Ester* was made Queen. Neither is it expressed to whom those royall gifts were giuen, but it is to bee supposed that they were giuen to those that were bidden vnto the feast, euen as at this day in some places it is a custome to giue giftes to those that are invited to a banquet.

By the example of this royall magnificence and liberalitie of *Assuerus*, let kings and great men learne, that their feasts and pastimes be not the cause of weeping and teares vnto their poore subiects, by

and exacting of taxes & other tributes: which yet notwithstanding at this day is wont to bee done in the Courts of many great Princes, so that they neither celebrate feasts nor marriage, nor come almost into any of their Cities, without great iniurie and oppression of the miserable people, whose very marrowe (as it were) they sucke out: so farre off be they from seeing liberal and beneficiall vnto them, that the ioy may be common to all: but here is scraping euery where, and violence reaching to satissie the sacred famine of a few Courtiers, which indeed can neuer be satisfied.

Moreouer here is set downe a patterne for all, vnto which they must conforme their marriage feasts, whosoever among Christians will celebrate them with holy mirth; that the beginning of so holy a bande and league, bee dedicated vnto the author thereof, of whom onely the blessing thereof doth depend.

But here euery man must measure himselfe according to his abilitie, least those things be consumed in a few daies, which



ought to have sufficed for many yeeres.

Besides, men must abstaine, in such feastes, so from all intemperance, in meate and drinke, from all filthy speech and prophane wantonnesse, and we must take care that the poore bee made partakers of our ioy: finally, wee must labour that all things be done holily in so holy an action: for whereas for the most part, men let loose the reines to all intemperance, it is the cause wherefore wee see so many unhappie endes of marriages, which God doth not blesse, because he dealeth but onely with the holy.

The wisdom of *Ester* is afterwarde set down in concealing those things which *Ahasuerus* had willed her, that is, of her kindred & people. In that the virgins are said to be gathered together the second time, it hath some difficultie in it, and may beare diuers senses. But this seemeth to be the most simple meaning, as we shall say that the king having so many Concubines, and *Ester* being declared to be Queene, and that there were as yet many maidens in the custodie of *Hegai* which had not yet bene brought in unto the king, did gather those rest againe together, that they might be restored every

upon the backes of Ester. 433

one vnto their friends and parents. For  
seeing he had chosen one out of the whole  
numbere to be his Queen, it was right that  
the rest should be sent backe againe to  
their homes. It is not altogether alio with-  
out difficultie, how it might come to passe  
that Ester being so suddenly exalted  
to so high a dignitie, could condeale her  
people for men are wont most especial-  
ly to make enquirie concerning such kind  
that very diligently. Wee must therefore  
suppose, that in those daies, y<sup>e</sup> people were  
not so curious as they be now, especially  
concerning a woman; and that they gave  
themselves only to mirth and ioy, not re-  
garding whence shee was. But especially  
the fauour of God is to bee considered,  
whereby Ester was preserved safe, that it  
might not be knowne of what kindred she  
was, or what religion she did professe, un-  
till there were firrings for it; the Lord so  
defending her against that contempt and  
envie, which if it had bene knowne shee  
had bene a Iewe & a captive, she should  
haue runne into. Behold how the Lord  
both direct the waies of his, how hee  
defendeth and maketh plain their paths,  
and giveth them at last the thing they wish



for. To what ende then should *Ester* speake any thing of her kindred or nation, when no man made demaunde concerning it, vntill fit opportunitie had her dutie should require it? Heere then her wisdom is greatly to bee commended, but especially therein is she to be praised, that although she were a Queene, yet she is obedient to her cosin *Mardochaeus*, eue as before when she was brought vp with him and vnder his custodie. This vertue is most rare, that those who are exalted out of base and lowe degree, to any estate or dignitie, do acknowledge their poore kinsmen, or will vouchsafe the of any honour; which pride and intolerencie is especially found in those *Tamissaries* which the Turke bringeth vp. For how can those who are lifted vp into dignitie, and so set free from their Parentes power, almost but waxe haughtie? when wee see those who yet are vnder their parents government, do account it a small matter to contemne them, and behaue themselves stubbornly against them? What faire excuses might *Ester* haue pretended to *Mardochaeus*, if she had refused to yeeld to his precepts? to wit, that shee was now vnder

the power of her husband, who being so mightie a Monarch, hee ought to knowe that her former estate was greatly altered, which now might not suffer her to bee subiect to a private man, & other matters of like sort. But shee, whatsoever honour and felicitie shee attained vnto, she attributed it vnto the good education she had vnder him, and to the good lessons & instructions she had receiued from him. For what dignitie, what honour can be compared to the incōparable treasure of true pietie & religiō, which by the care of our Parents, & their diligent education wee attaine vnto? How great then shall the vice of ingratitude & vnthankfulnes be, vnlesse children alwaies haue it fixed in their memorie? what a madnesse finally is it, to esteem lesse of such a precious treasure, then of worldly riches & transitorie honours? The godlinesse which *Ester* had learned vnder *Mardacheus*, was it not far more profitable vnto her then her royall crown? She did then iustly obey him whō she did honour as her father. What then shall become of those miserable wretches, who attaining to the least honours, do arrogantly despise euery man? Truly they are worthis to be hated of all men:



and as they set light by their old friends,  
and despite good counsell, to deserve they  
to be deprived of them, and to be suffe-  
red to sink vnder the burthen of their ho-  
nour. And these things are thus farre spo-  
ken of the moderate and wisdom of Es-  
ther, who would to God shee had many  
followers, that would be desirous of her  
vertues both publicly and privately.  
It remaineth that wee heare a singular  
dutie performed by *Mardochaeus* to the  
king, whereby hee made him selfe a way  
to great honour and authoritie with *A-  
hasuerus*, though not so soone as hee deser-  
ued: which was, that hee declared vnto  
the king by *Esther*, the treason of two coun-  
tlers, who conspired the death of king *A-  
hasuerus*, and so hee deliuered the king from  
death: and when as the whole tract be-  
ing examined, was found out, and they  
were executed by iust punishment, the  
matter was written before the king in the  
booke of Chronicles. In this Historie,  
first these two, *Biztan* and *Tereb*, offer  
themselves to our consideration, who in  
their wrath conspire the kings death.

What occasion they had of this wie-  
ked counsell is not exprest, and there-

for we ought not to be over curious in  
 searching of it; but this is to be observed;  
 that Counters as they are drawne with  
 desires and passions, do many times very  
 quickly take any occasion of sedition and  
 treasons. For they oftentimes conspire  
 against their Prince, either upon the de-  
 miall of their petition, or for indignation  
 and hatred; and enuie, which they con-  
 ceauce at other mens honour; whom they  
 cannot abide should be preferred before  
 them, or moued with ambition, and de-  
 sire of alteration, as *Absholon* did against *2. Sam. 15*  
*David*. And what Prince is there, who  
 may iustly boast that he hath no such trai-  
 tors in his Court? Princes also themselves  
 oftentimes by their own insolencie, pride  
 and crueltie; diuers times by their sloth  
 and negligence, doe yeelde occasion to  
 their Counters to rebell. Neuerthelesse,  
 they are wicked and vngodly men, who  
 conspire wilfully the death of their Prince,  
 and especially those whom hee hath so  
 trusted, that they are admitted to the  
 keeping and guard of their persons: as  
 these were by *Issurur*, whom hee pre-  
 ferred to the custodie of his gate. For vn-  
 to such men the way is easie to execute



their conspiracie: as it is reported, that di-  
 vers of the Nobles his most familiars, did  
 conspire the death of *Alexander the great*.  
 “ But kings are enforced to commit them-  
 “ selves & their life to such men: And look  
 “ how much the greater the trust is that is  
 “ reposed in them, so much the more vgly  
 “ is their treason and detestable in the sight  
 “ of all men. But vnto such wickednesse are  
 “ we growne in this age, that euen the Phi-  
 “ sistians, from whom Princes looke for the  
 “ meanes of their preservation, & commit  
 “ their bodies to their direction, haue bene  
 “ found to haue cōspired the death of those  
 “ who haue bene the causes of their wealth  
 “ and honor. Wherefore those Princes are  
 blessed, who put their trust wholly in  
 God, and not in mans ayd: those are hap-  
 pie whom God doth shield and protect.  
 Besides, in the person of *Assuerus* wee see  
 how greatly the life of kings & great men  
 is many times endangered, though their  
 guard do seem to defend them against all  
 daunger. But often doth it happen, that  
 they are more in daunger then meaner  
 men, especially if they turn their iust go-  
 uernment into tyrannie. Wherefore the  
 auncients haue vsed it for a prouerb, that  
 fewe

fewe Tyrants descend to *Phar* by drie death, that is, die without blood. So *Alexander* the great, was made away by poyson: so *Iulius Cesar* was murdered in the Senate: so very many Romaine Emperors were slaine by their souldiers: so *Bennadab* was choked: *Isbith* slaine by two wicked men on his bed: *Ieo* the king of *Iuda* by two of his servants: *Amasias* was slaine at *Lachis*: finally of twentie kings which raigned in *Israel*, tenn of them died by violent death: that he seemeth not to have spoken vnwittily, who said, that a Tyrant was like to him who sate at a table furnished with all daintie dishes, accompanied with all kinde of musicke, and a great many of wayting-men readie at all commands; but seeing a naked sword hanging over his head by a small thread, and every minute readie to fall vpon him. Therefore many wise men amongst the, haue wished that they might resigne those great honours which they had attained, if safely they might, to leade a quiet and sure life without danger; as it is written of *Augustus Cesar*. Yea, very many haue quite given over their Empires, as *Dioclesian* and *Maximi-*



an, those capitals enemies and persecutor  
of Christians *Antigonus* King of *Macedonia*, when he was to set the Diademe on  
his head, said very fitly & truly O crown,  
if men knew how great cares thou bring-  
gest with thee, none would so much as  
stoupe to take thee vp, though thou layest  
in his way. So that state of life which wee  
account so happie, is oftentimes condem-  
ned as most vnhappie, even by those who  
are esteemed most happy, as being most  
opē to so many entrapplings, partly of open  
enemies, partly of faithlesse friends, from  
which indeed none could be safe, were it  
not that the eyes of the Lord do watch  
for the safetie of kings, though even un-  
worthy of his fauour & good wil. Which  
heere wee see done for this *Assuerus*, un-  
to whom God raised vp *Mordochaeus*, by  
whom hee is in time admonished of the  
conspirators, that no good thing be sto-  
wed on God, should bee bestowed in  
vaine. That benefite which *Assuerus* did  
for *Ester* and the whole people of God,  
was very late and fresh in memorie: and  
god by and by doth requite it, deliuering  
him from the hands of those who had  
conspired his death: that *David* doth not  
without

without cause say, That it is God which gi-  
ueth deliuerance vnto kings, and rescueth Psa. 144.  
them from the hurtfull sword as he himselfe 10.  
had often by experience found. It is also  
to be noted, that *Affuerus* was warned of  
the treason that was practised against him  
by the relation of a mean man, that kings  
may learne to contemne none, though  
they be but of base and low degree. If a-  
ny demaund how *Mardocheus* could de-  
tect that conspiracie, it may be answered  
red, that he was one of the porters of the  
kings gate, which is apparant out of this  
and other places, especially the fift and  
sixt chapter, and therefore he might heare  
and see somewhat wherby he might per-  
ceiue the matter; and peraduenture hee  
might be solicited by the traitors, to see  
of what good will he was in the case, and  
to drawe him to their partialitie. What-  
soeuer it was, it pleased God to vse this  
instrument, as well to preserve the Kings  
life, as also to make knowne *Mardocheus*  
fidelitie so much the better. We are here  
then to obserue, that nothing is done by  
fortune, but all things are gouerned by  
Gods prouidence, who by this prepared  
in time another helper against the immi-  
nent



new danger of his Church. Here let all naturall subiects and inhabitants in any Realme, learn what is their dutie towards Princes, to wit, that there is not only honour and obedience due vnto them, but also a care and watchfulnesse, and defence of their life and dignitie. Moreover, that it is a thing praise-worthie to bewray the guiltie, though so oftentimes those who detect them incurre great danger, & the hatred of many, especially if vpon examination the matter prooue not so. Therefore *Mardocheus* dealt indeed faithfully and wisely, but not without danger, being a stranger and a captive: but his oath and office did so require.

He openeth the matter by *Ester*, either because he thought for his basenesse that hee was not worthie to speake vnto the king, or because hee thought the matter would haue the more authoritie if it proceeded from a person in fauour: besides, by this meanes the loue of the king towards *Ester* his wife, might be increased and confirmed, when he should see her so carefull of his preservation.

The king also handleth the matter wisely.

ly. For hee maketh inquisition, and doth not rashly vpon a bare report cause them to be condemned. By which thing Princes are warned not to admit vnadvisedly euery accusation: for if accusation onely should suffice, who should bee innocent, who should be safe from the tongues of slanderers?

When the matter was found out, the offenders were punished and hanged on a tree, that is, eyther fastened to a crosse, as in those times they accustomed, or hanged on a galows, as is vied at this day. Further in the matter of treason, especially where it concerneth the life of the Prince, the will beeing proued, is holden for the fact: as also in other offences, as if any prepare poyson for anothers death, which yet was not drinke, but giuen to be drunken, seeing that hee sought his life, though hee killed him not, he should die for it.

Worthely then are these two punished by death, though they did but onely conspire the kings death: which matter by the kings commaundement is written in the Chronicles of the Persians.

Hereby



Hereby it appeareth, that after a laudable custome Kings were wont to haue their Chronicles and yearly Acts recorded in all ages, in which all memorable matters through the whole kingdome should be enrolled, and so preserved for posteritie. And this is very commendable for those manifold comodities which wee receiue by Histories, as in the beginning of the booke was declared. But the king remembreth not to requite *Mardocheus*, in which he cannot escape the note of an vnthankfull minde. For as iustice hath place in the punishing of the wicked for their offences, so is it also a part of iustice, to rewarde the good according to their deserts. But these things came not thus so passe without Gods providence, (which yet excuseth not *Affuerus* fault) that in a more fit time *Mardocheus* might receiue that hono[r] which was prepared for him by God, as in the sixt Chapter wee shall see. Therefore let vs not be wearie of well doing, though the enbie of man encrease and rise at it, for the rewarde though it be deferred, yet shall it not be lost. And if men be vnthankfull of benefits receiued, God, who is rich towards

*upon the back of Asler.* 341

wards all that call vpon him, and worship  
him in purenelle and sinceritie of mind,  
will restore abundantly, that which not-  
withstanding hee on earth not: and farther  
giuing vs the power of wol-willing and  
wel-working, will crowne his workes in  
vs with immortall glorie, through Iesus  
Christ our Lord, to whom with the  
Father and the holy Ghost, be all power  
and dominion for euer. Amen.

## THE EIGHT

### Sermon.

*Haman is extolled and worshipped by al  
the Courtiers, except Mardocheus:  
wher at Haman waxing angrie deli-  
beratech to make away the whole nati-  
on of the Iewes. In the first verses  
of the third Chapter.*

## CHAP. III.

*After these things did king Assuerus pre-  
sente Haman the soune of Ammedatha*

L

the



gite, or created him: for that he fa-  
 blye above the son of al the Princes that  
 were about him: his husbands brother.

2. And all the kings servants that entered in  
 by the kings gate, bowed their knees and re-  
 verenced Haman: but Mordecai bowed

not the knee, neither did reverence.

3. Wherefore the kings servants that entered

by the kings gate, said unto Mordecai,

why transgressest thou the Kings commandment?

4. Therefore when they had spoken unto him

daily, and he would not heare them, they

told Haman, that they might see whe-

ther Mordecaies words would stand, for

he had told them that he was a Iewe.

5. And when Haman saw that Mordecai

bowed not the knee unto him, nor did re-

verence unto him, then was Haman full

of wrath.

6. Now he thought it a litle to lay his hand

on Mordecai onely: and because they had

shewed him the people of Mordecai, Ha-

man sought to destroy all the Iewes, that

were throughout all the kingdome of As-

suertus, even the people of Mordecai.

The wise man saith, Pro. 29. 2. When

the righteous are increased, the people

reioyce.

reioyce: but when the wicked be a rule, then  
the people sigh: vnto which also that which  
is Psa. 12. 9. is to be referred. The wicked  
walke too and fro, when euil men are exalted  
to high dignitie. The vse of which senten-  
ces, this Historic doth plainly set before  
our eyes.

For when as *Ester* was exalted vnto the dignitie royall, as before we sawe, there was great ioy brought vnto all nations: but now whē *Haman* is promoted, a fierce and cruell man, there is prepared for all the godly, weeping and teares: and at the last by his wicked counsels, threescore & tenne thousande men were brought to death, as in the progresse of this historie we shall see.

In this Chapter is declared, how  
Hamāns indignation was so great against  
Mardachens, because hee reuerenced  
him not, as others did, that hee procu-  
red a commaundement from the king to  
destroy in one certaine day appointed,  
all the nation of the Iewes which was  
subiect to his Empire.  
At this present wee are to consider, how  
he was lift vp by the king into so high an  
office of honour, &c. How he was re-  
spected by the king, &c.



148 The eight Sermon.

perced of alme except *Mardocheus* yet.  
 2. 3. 4. & how throught indignation &  
 impotencie of minde, hee tooke counsell  
 howe to destroy the Jewes, together  
 with *Mardocheus*, at one massacre:  
*verse 5. & 6.* so cruell is *Ambition*, so fierce  
 and sauage is desire of reuenge in those  
 who affect diuine honours.

See therefore first the Authors words,  
*When these things were done, the king As-*  
*suerus did magnifie Haman the son of Ham-*  
*medatha the Agagite, and exalted him, so*  
*that he set his seate above the seate of all his*  
*Princes that were about him.* This stranger  
 the kings fauor did thus exalt, foure years  
 after the celebration of *Esters* marriage:  
 for *Ester* was brought in vnto the King a-  
 bout the end of 7. year of the raigne of  
*Assuerus*, Chap. 2. *verse 6.* and it appea-  
 reth by those things which are spoken af-  
 ter, that *Haman* dignitie and fauour hap-  
 pened about the ende of the eleuenth  
 yeare, because as soone as hee perceiued  
 that *Mardocheus* would not honour him,  
 hee conspired the death of him and all his  
 nation, about the beginning of the 10.  
 yeare of *Assuerus* raigne, *verse 7.* The  
 cause is not exprest why hee was thus  
 promoted by the king, neither ought wee  
 greatly

greatly to labour in searching it: for oftentimes kings for very light causes doe exalt men altogether unworthie, but despise men that deserve honour, and that are endued with excellent vertues: because they perswade themselves, that their will ought to stand for reason, and that whatsoeuer they list, is lawfull for them. Oftentimes for a little service even in an vnhonnest matter, for counsell giuen to establish tyrannie, and augment tribute, for inventing some new delight and pleasure, for some extreame flatterie, and such like, kings perswade themselves that they haue sufficient cause to promote the worst men to the highest honours, and to admit them into the number of their chiefest friends, and to follow their aduise and counsell in their most weightie affaires. For what cause then so euer *the man* was promoted, it appeareth hee was a man unworthie of it, being full of malice and crueltie: and so it often cometh to passe, that wicked men by their crafts and cunning, are preferred by the inconsiderate fauour of Princes, to honour, and yet not without Gods providence, who onely lifteth vp whom please him, and



throweth down whom he list. Now God doth this as well to exercise the godly, as to punish the vnthankfulnesse of the world; to beate downe the pride of kings who abuse their power; and to throwe downe the vngodly, with so much the greater shame and ruine, by how much the higher they were exalted. That honour which the King commandeth to be given to him, offendeth in excessse: because it was more then becometh man, though vsual to be yecded to the kings of *Perſia*. But this is altogether a wonderfull matter, how kings being so carefull and zealous ouer their honor, do yet notwithstanding communicate it euen vnto bad men, in whom there shineth not the least sparke of vertue. For it is most worthe and commendable and profitable for the state, to preferre to the gouernment of the Commonwealth, men notable for their vertues and wisdomes. So *Pharao* made *Ioseph* ruler of *Aegypt*, whose wisdom was sufficiently knowne, and approved: so *Darius* by his wisdom obtained great honor both with *Nebuchadnezzar*, & with *Darius*. Notwithstanding many times Princes are too prodigall in these

these things, supposing that they intended  
the insignificance of God, in promising  
to honour whom please them.

Besides, this *Haman* is said to be an *Agagite*,  
that is, of the offspring of the kings  
of the *Amalekites*, who all were of *Agag*.

summarized *Agag*, as the kings of *Egypt*  
were all called *Pharaohs* of *Pharaoh*, and  
the Emperours of *Rome*, *Cæsars* of *Julius*.

*Cæsar* and *Agag* both signify a king.  
He was then an alien, and not a naturall  
subject of the kings: it is also unknowne,

whether he were a captive or no, & whe-  
ther he came into the Court by the kings  
speciall favour, or by desert, or impoued  
by his owne ambition.

But by what oc-  
casion soever he came into the Court, he  
descended of a nation which god had cur-  
sed for their cruelty: and had forbidden

the childre of *Israel* that they should not  
at any time haue peace with them: but al-  
together roote them out from vnder the

heavens, and destroy them with a perpe-  
tall slaughter.

so that although the *Amalekites* did de-  
scend of *Esau* the brother of *Jacob*, and so  
were ioyned in kindred to the *Israelites*,

yet



ye did they alwaies strike in deadly and  
hereditarie hatreds, and were most mor-  
tall enemies, the one vnto the other. d. on  
Which on the *Israelites* part was done by  
the expresse commandement from God,  
for that inhumanie which the *Amalekites*  
did shewe in the wilderness against their  
brethren: being the first that came out to  
wane against them after their coming  
out of *Egypt*: Behold then the most ca-  
pitall and deadly enemy of the *Jewes* is  
exalted aboue the, into the most highest  
state of honour. And such is the conditi-  
on of the Church, that most often she  
seeth her most malicious and deadly foe  
daily to be extolled, and to receive new  
increases of honour, increasing with all  
their desire of her vtter overthrow.  
Now followeth that honour which the  
Courtiers do yeeld vnto him by the kings  
commandement, wherevnto onely *Mor-  
dechaus* doth most constantly resist. All  
the kings seruants therefore which passed  
in and out at the kings gate bowed them-  
selues, and did honor *Mordechaus*, onely *Mor-  
dechaus* bowed not himself down, neither  
did him reuerence. This is the custom  
of those which followe the Court, that  
they

they all fall downe before him whom the king magnifieth, little enquiring whether the cause be good or no. I confesse, some did it against their wills and for feare, others that they might procure themselves fauour, which thing especially they hunted after: and none will willingly enter into hatred with great men, none dare controule or condemne their actions and deuises. But truly it alwaies hath seemed an intollerable seruitude, to men of courage and any worth, to fall downe before a mortall man although the people of the East, and namely the *Persians*, did exceed all measure therein: whose custome when *Alexander* the great would followe, after that by warre he had gotten the Monarchie, hee purchased thereby the hatred of the *Grecians*, and chiefly of the *Macedonians* his owne subiects. For indeede it appeareth by the Histories, that this honour which was giuen to the kings of *Persia*, was not meere civill, but mixt with that honour which is due vnto God. For otherwise we read, that holy kings were honoured by their subiects vpon their knees, with their faces towards the ground: but so that no part of diuine wor-



ship was mingled therewith. Seeing this  
 heere therefore the question was of an  
 honour, more then ciuill and due vnto a  
 man, *Mardocheus* refuseth to fall downe  
 on his face; & indeed so much the rather,  
 because this *Haman* was descended from  
 a Nation which God had cursed, and  
 which he willed his people shuld hate and  
 abhorre.

Now his constancie is so much the  
 more to bee commended, that looke how  
 much the more he is vrged at, and carped  
 by the Courtiers, to obey the Kings com-  
 mand, so much the firmer is he in his pur-  
 pose, and is daunted by no threatnings,  
 neither being accused to *Haman*, eyther  
 concealeth his Nation, or dissembleth his  
 religion, which was the onely cause where-  
 fore he would not cast down himselfe be-  
 fore him, whom he knew by Gods decree  
 (which could not be called backe) to bee  
 accursed. The greater then that the im-  
 portunitie was of the Courtiers, who flat-  
 tered *Haman* and sought his fauour; the  
 more greiuous the threatnings were; the  
 more certaine the daunger that hanged ou-  
 er *Mardocheus* head; the more praise  
 worthy was his vertue and constancie.

but

But some will say, that this is not to be accounted constancie, but contumacie, or at the least rashnesse and impudencie, to cast himselfe into so euident a danger, so prouoke the Kings wrath against him, and so stirre vp the rage of so mightie a man against himselfe, yea and his whole Nation. For, will he say, could he not keepe himselfe close, & not come into *Hannano* fight?

Answer, that hee had first a regard of Gods sentence against all the Amalekites, that hee would not honour him whom God had cursed: and besides, by reason of his office and oath, he must of necessity stand at the Kings gate. He might moreover be embolded by some instinct and secret motion of the holy Ghost, to give testimony to the truth, and make a way ready to that wonderfull deliuerance which afterward was wrought.

So God brought forth those three children to be witnesses of his glorie, against that idolatrie which *Nabuchadnezzar* would haue established: that being cast into the fire furnace, and by strange miracle deliuered from thence, the most wonderfull power of GOD should be made the more bright, and



and more fearefull to them who durst go  
about to tread it vnder foote. This ex-  
ample of rare constancie is necessarie for  
vs at this day, that we may be armed with  
invincible constancie against their flatter-  
ing speeches, or threatening words; who  
would haue vs to acknowledge that An-  
tichrist of Rome, and be subiect vnto him.

2. Thes. 2. For he is that man of synne, that son of per-  
3. 4. dition, who sitteth in the Temple of God, and  
proudly exalteth himselfe against all that  
is called God, and causing himselfe to bee wor-  
shipped as God. What a blockishnesse the  
vnt, what an infidelitie to fall before him  
as to hold him for such an head, as he  
would be accounted in the Church, & to  
consent to all his blasphemies and Idolat-  
ries. Go on brethren, let vs call to minde  
this constancie of *Mardocheus*: who  
though hee were alone, and were vrge-  
d by the Courtiers to do as they did, though  
the kings commandement were layd vpon  
to him, though hee were overwhelmed  
with threatnings, and at last accused as  
rebell, yet hee remaineth without feare  
and yeeldeth not vnto them: but hee de-  
fendeth himselfe with this reason, that he  
is a Iewe, and that his religion would not  
perm

mit him, to bowe down himselfe vnto  
him whom God would haue to be de-  
stroyed. *So in that generall Apostasie wherein*  
force of the edicts and proclamations  
Princes, many yeeld diuine honor vnto  
Antichrist, and the truth of the son  
God is abiured, wee must call to re-  
embrance that wee professe Christi-  
tie, and that God the onely true God  
to bee worshipped by vs. For what  
name I pray shall it bee vnto vs, if wee  
be not the like courage and strength of  
Mordechai, in preserving the Lords right vnto  
him, and giuing God his due worship  
honour, with so many nations who do  
spise that Idole; as was in one *Morde-  
chai* in resisting the kings Edicts, ouer-  
coming the importunitie of the Cour-  
iers, and noneyelding, no not a lot, to  
the furie of so cruell an enemy. And this  
is to be obserued in the example of  
*Mardocheus*.  
Besides, wee see that those which most  
wilfully obey the Edict of the King, not  
knowing whether the matter be just and ho-  
nest, or no, do neuer make an ende of al-  
luring, yea and by force compelling of  
others



others into the same wickednesse w<sup>ch</sup> they do. So none do at this time more sol-  
cite Christians vnto Apostasie, and to  
away from the true religion; then those  
who haue bin first themselves Apostasie  
and forsake the truth. But mark I beseech  
you, with what weapons they are furn-  
ished to set vpon them. They set down the  
Kings proclamation to rectifie the  
they propose their owne example, they  
bend against them the threats of the  
fractio of their families, and those who  
they see to be most constant they accuse.  
Where it is to bee obserued (Experi-  
ence the mistresse of all matters teaching  
the same) that there neuer wanteth store  
of accusers, which by their policies hit  
those, who desire to keepe themselves  
cleane and vnspotted from all Idolatrie  
and vnhonestie. But this mischiefe rui-  
neth and rageth euery where, that thing  
well done, are imputed as faults, and the  
reprooffe, turneth to the hurt of the  
good.

And as it was a plausible accu-  
sation against *Mardocheus*, that hee ouer-  
durst breake the Kings commandement  
(which could not, they thought, but pre-  
ce

etude from great stubbornesse & contumacie) so at this day are we accused, as rebellles and disturbers of the publique state. But a good conscience ought to be our comfort before G.O.D., who acknowledgeth and approueth those to be his, who despise the wicked, and honour his seruants. And thus far touching the fact of *Mardocheus* and these Courtiers.

*Psal. 15. 4*

Let vs now goe forward and weigh the wrath and furie of *Haman* against *Mardocheus* and his Nation, when hee perceiueth that hee bowed not vnto him as others did. Being tolde of it then, hee marketh *Mardocheus* more diligently, and obserueth his dooing, although he had about him many wayters, who pryed carefully into all actions, but so would hee cut off all matter of excuse, after himselfe had made tryall of it.

And therefore his courage and manly minde shyneth so much the brighter, that when hee sawe all their eyes bent vpon him, though others bowed themselves vnto *Haman*, yet he continued vndaunted in his purpose.

He



He had therefore driven out of his minde  
all feare of enemie, flaunder, infamie, yea  
finally of death it selfe, when as the very  
presence of *Haman* could not a whit moue  
him from his determination. Such ought  
the magnanimitie of the true faithfull ser-  
uants of God be, that they bee not feared  
or driven off from their due & holy pur-  
pose, with any power of mortall man, be  
it neuer so great, or with the presence or  
threates of any man, bee hee neuer so  
fierce.

And this constancie and readinesse of  
minde, doth shew that *Mardocheus* was  
thoroughly resolu'd in his conscience, that he  
did no more but his durie. And without  
all doubt, when the question is of the yeel-  
ding vp of life, a faithfull man ought to  
be certainly perswaded, that hee neither  
doth nor taketh in hand any thing, but  
by the immoueable authoritie of the  
word of God, to whom he dedicateth his  
life, and committeth the issue of all euents  
vnto him.

Now by how much the more firme that  
*Mardocheus* constancie is, by so much the  
more is the rage of *Haman*'s wrath kind-  
led. For the proude can beare nothing  
with





1. Sam. 15

2. Sam. 8.

\*The D. of  
Guise.

fered by the Israelites, as by *Saul* and *Dag*.  
 uid, and before by the Tribe of *Simeon*: al  
 which things moving him, it is very likely  
 that hee easily assented to so bloudie a  
 slaughter. Whereby we haue it sufficient-  
 ly made manifest, that cruell and ambiti-  
 ous men haue no moderation, but over-  
 flowe as a floud or riuer, and with violence  
 drowne and destroy whatsoeuer displea-  
 seth them: that they cannot satisfie their  
 bloody hunger, vnlesse together with the  
 bodies of mē they destroy their soules too;  
 not content to haue rooted out the people;  
 vnlesse they also abolish religion and the  
 seruice of god. That \* *Haman* of our time,  
 when he was climbed vp vnto his height,  
 by the fauour of diuers Kings, and promis-  
 sed himself the Crown, one onely familie  
 beeing the stop of his plots and designe-  
 ments, he desired notwithstanding, with  
 that to ouerthrowe religion, and to beate  
 to the ground all the reformed Churches:  
 Here also is to be obserued, the good-  
 nesse and patience of God, who though  
 he had many yeares before giuen sentence  
 of the rooting out of the Amalekites, yet  
 deferred the first execution of it about 4  
 hundred yeares after hee had determi-  
 ned it; and from that time there passed  
 fives

five hundred yeares and moe, to this wherein he suffered *Haman* to be exalted to so high a degree of honour. But wicked men are appeased with no benefites from the Lord; nay rather they are confirmed more and more in their malice. For GOD had hitherto suffered *Haman* with long patience, but he deviseth how vicerly to ouerthrowe the church. But by this meanes, the iustice of Gods reulenge appeareth the clearer, by how much more the vngodly are hardned in their malice, vntill they haue filled the measure of their iniquities: & in the mean while the patience of the faithful is tried, vntill God giue vnto them their right Go. For the brethren, let vs not be offended with the prosperous successe of the wicked, but let vs feare God, not declining from his obediēce, and whatsoeuer the enemies practise, let vs honour him, comending into his hand our life, whereof he taketh a peculiar charge, & will in his good time, pluck it out of the iawes of the enemies: & wil get vnto himself exceeding glory, as wel by the vengeance he wil execute vpon the enemies, as also by the miraculous deliuerance of his. To him therefore onely be glory & dominion for euermore. *Ame.*



## THE NINTH

## Sermon.

What course Haman did followe for  
the execution of his determination, in  
the 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11. verses.

7. In the first month (which is the month  
of Nisan) in the twelfth yeare of King As-  
tides: they cast Pur (that is a lot) be-  
fore Haman, from day to day, and from  
month to month, unto the twelfth month;  
that is the month Adar.

8. Then Haman said unto King Astides,  
there is a people scattered and dispensed in  
all the Provinces of thy Kingdome, whose  
lawes are diuers from the lawes of all peo-  
ple: for they do not obserue the Kings lawes.  
Therefore it is not the Kings profit to suffer  
them: for if it please the King, let it be written that  
they may be destroyed: and I will pay prime  
of thousand talents of silver, into the hands of  
whome thou shalt haue the charge of this busines.  
So bring it into the Kings treasure.

upon the booke of Ester.

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10. Then the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the sonne of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Iewes aduersarie.

11. And the king said vnto Haman, Let the flouer be thine, and do with this people as it seemeth good in thine eyes.

**A**fter that wicked men haue once conceived mischief, they alwaies are in trauell of it, vntill they haue brought it forth: so that they cease not, vntill they haue cruelly put in execution that which wickedly they did deuise: especially when the desire of reuenge doth pricke them on. Which passion is one of the most vehement, wherewith men are driven.

This is clearely to be seene in this wicked Haman, who when vpon that furious indignation which he had conceived because *Mordecheus* would not honor him, he had determined with himselfe not onely to kill him, but together with him, to destroy the whole nation of the Iewes: hee burneth with desire speedily to execute that his bloodie purpose, and seeketh carefully alwaies to perfect it: and



first hee runneth vnto Iuda; then to the Kings authoritie; whereby he easily obtaineth what he wil; that his determination might stand, to kill and destroy the whole Nation of the Iewes, which was dispersed into diuers places of *Assuerus* dominion. So there is nothing so cruel, nothing so barbarous, nothing so bloudie, which the capitall enemies of the Church cannot obtaine at the hands of Princes, vtterly to ouerthrowe and roote it out. But the eye of the Lord, which watcheth for the safetie of his, causeth that these wicked ones, do often bring forth a birth, quite contrary to their deliberation, and that they fall into the pit which they digged for others: and into the nets which theselues did bend, and that the euill which they went about, falleth vpon their own head.

This Historie ought to teach vs the estate of the Church in this world, and the disposition of her enemies, as also what meanes they are accustomed to vse, practising for this purpose, witchcraft and forceries; and feyning accusations, whereby they blind the eyes of kings, that they may the more easily abuse their name and authoritie, their power and for-

ces, all which things, by the exposition of every part, we shal the better vnderstand. First then *Haman* commandeth to cast a lot before him, which in the Persia tooong is called *Pur*. The time is noted for the greater light and credit of the Historie, to wit, the first month of the 12. yeare of the raigne of *Ahasuerus*, about foure yeares after that *Ester* was proclaimed Queene: The end which he proposeth to himself in casting the lot, was, that it might be known what moneth and what day, would be fittest for the execution of his cursed purpose; & it is said, that the lot being cast frō day to day, and from moneth to moneth, did fall vpon the 12. moneth, which here is called *Adar*, answering in part to our February. For 6 months are here reckoned after the maner of the Iewes, which begā their yeare in March: the day also is afterward noted, *Vers. 13.* to wit, the 13. day of the month. So that the lots do certifie *Haman*, both of the month & day, which shuld be fittest for the executing of y<sup>e</sup> which he had cōsulted in which thing he was decreed, as he deserved. for before that day, shame fell vpon himselfe, and that destruction which hee had prepared for others. Now *Haman* (as we see) fleeth



unto Lot, to ask counsel of his gods, and to enquire whether that were acceptable vnto them which he went about, & what opportunitie they would yeelde him for the performante thereof. For there is nothing so vniust which idolaters do not perswade themselves to be acceptable to their gods, when as it once liketh themselves.

What kinde of lotte hee vsed no man knoweth, because the holy Scriptures do not declare. And it is evidently knowne, that these miserable heathen being blinded by *Satan*, who is the spirit of errour, did vse diuers kinde of lots and diuinations: for some did coniecture & diuine by the earth, some by the water, some by the ayre, some by the fire, some by the course & aspects of Planets & other Stars, some by diuelles, which the Scriptures call *Pythons* or spirits of diuination: some by those answers which the Images and statues of their false gods doe giue: and the most of them by the entrailes of their sacrifices. Finally, there is nothing created which these miserable blinde men haue not abused to their diuinations. I leaue out lots, which euery one by himselfe might

deuise.

deuise. So the father of lyes, after he had turned men away from the word of God, and those answeres which hee gaue by his true seruants and Prophets, which are the only rule according to which our life and all our actions are to be framed, he did euē make them madde with so many sorceries and diuinations, which he brought in, in steed of Gods word, and bewitched them by all meanes, with diuers sorts of lyes in steed of Gods truth: that if at any time he spake any thing that were true, and that things came to passe as he foretold them, it was done by Gods iudgement, giuing to the vncleane spirit the efficacie of error, and granting him libertie, that those who had left the loue of the truth might belecue lyes. So Satan by reason of that great knowledge and experience hee hath of things past, might a great wayes before, by the causes gather the effects, and by certain cōiectures foretel of things to come: which is not to diuine, but by the causes to iudge of the effects, which all men are wont to doo, who haue attained to any perfect knowledge of any science.

*2. Thes. 2.*

*11, 12.*

Now seeing this pestiferous vanitie



hath place at this day amongst men, and  
 namely, amongst those who professe the-  
 selues Christians, wee are to be warned,  
 how great a fault, yea wicked and abho-  
 minable before God, lot-casting is, or a-  
 ny other kind of witchcraft or diuination,  
 Which is apparant by those things which  
 are written, *Leuit. 19. 31.* and *20. 6.* and  
*Deut. 18. 10. 11. 12.* in all which places,  
 they are adiudged to death, whosoever  
 giue their mindes to any of those diuina-  
 tions. And *1. Sam. 28.* *Saul* is said to haue  
 added this as an heape to all his euils, that  
 hee had recourse to those that had famili-  
 ar spirits; and *1. Chron. 10. 13.* these are  
 the words of the holy Ghost. *So Saul died*  
*for his transgression against the Lord, even*  
*against the word of the Lord, which he kept*  
*not, and in that hee sought and asked coun-*  
*sell of a witch which had a familiar spirit, and*  
*asked not of the Lord.* And here vnto belo-  
 geth that of *Ochozia* or *Ahazia*, the K. of  
*Israel*, who when he fel into a disease, and  
 had sent to aske concerning the euent  
 thereof, of the Oracle of *Beelzebub* the  
 God of the *Accaronites*, was therefore so  
 sharply reprooued by *Elia* the Prophet,  
 who told him of his death, *2. King. 1.* Fi-  
 nally,

nally, the scripture, to shewe forth the  
 corruptions and extreame iniquitie of  
*Manasses* the king of *Juda*, saith: that hee  
 also gaue his mind to diuinations, 2. King. 21.  
 Let no man therefore thinke the sinne of  
 Diuiners, Sorcerers, Enchanters, Necro-  
 mancers, and those who vse familiar spi-  
 rits, to be a light sinne: for they all leaue  
 God to followe the diuel: and the light  
 that shineth in the holy scriptures, to de-  
 light in lies; and for Christ their Maister,  
 they follow *Beliall*: & in stead of  $\text{h}$  light  
 of his spirit, they run after  $\text{h}$  deceits of  
 the spirit of darknes. It is further to be ob-  
 serued, that there be many sorts of witch-  
 crafts & diuinations which proceed from  
 the wicked spirit, which yet vnskilful men  
 accout to be but sports & pastimes, or else  
 things lawful to be vsed: as, to knit a point  
 to hinder the effect of holy matrimony; to  
 moue a siue; to know who hath taken or  
 stolne any thing; to throw the key of the  
 chief doore of the house into the fire, that  
 the witch may come, who is suspected to  
 haue bewitched any: to run to soothsaiers  
 or diuiners, either to recouer things lost,  
 or to get helpe for any disease, or to know  
 whether a disease be deadly, or to heare  
 the fore-



foretelling of good fortune by them: finally out of dreames or the meetings of any thing to search out the truth of diuers cuets to come. For Sathan cunningly mingling himselfe in all these things doth guide them: that he may turne away the minds of men from the word of God, from his feare, from trust in his fatherly goodnesse, and finally from care & heedfulnessse, to learn of the spirit of God the way whereby we may be governed in all distresse, calling vpon him, and attentively reading and hearing his word. For that malicious spirit leaueth nothing vnattēpted, and searcheth all crafts; wherby when hee hath turned vs from the onely voyce & doctrine of our good shepheard Christ Iesus, hee may leade vs after himselfe, to seeke counsell, ayde and helpe at his hand. But those that turne away from Christ Iesus to these vaine and idolatrous things, must looke for nothing else but ruine and confusion. For what other thing can hee bring vnto man, who was a liar & a murderer from the beginning, but onely death and deceit? Now heere by þ way we may note, the means which they followed, who were the chiefe promoters

*Iob. 8.*

moters of that slaughter and horrible butchery of the poore faithful ones in *France*, even they used the art and counsell of *Witches*, *Soothsayers*, and wicked spirits, as there are in the Church of *Rome*, yea and in the Courts of Princes many, very devils incarnate, who are addicted altogether to those deceits, and to all kinde of magicall incantations and divinations. Albeit I beseech yee, unto what thing doth the greatest part of the service of the Church of *Rome* leane; more then (as they perswade themselves) to the appearing of the spirites and ghosts of the dead? And what other thing is that but a kinde of *Necromancie*? Therefore what marvel is it, that a religion founded vpon lies, is maintained by the same arts, and giveth place to the crafts and deceites of *Sathan* to oppresse the Church of God? And this was the first way which *Haman* used for the executing of his determination.

Now let us see by what skill he perswaded the king, that hee might abuse his name and authoritie to effect his cruell purposes. *Haman saide to the king Assuerus, there is a people dispersed among thy people*



people in all the Provinces of thy kingdom, separated from others, whose lawes are diuers from the lawes of all people: and the kings lawes they do not obserue, and therefore it is not profitable for the king to suffer them. Hee disdaineth to name the Iewes, but that hee might make them odious to the king, hee setteth them forth by these foure notes. 1. That they are dispersed through all the kings Provinces, 2. That they dwell apart from others, 3. That they haue lawes different from all other people. 4. That they obey not the kings lawes: that is shortly, that they are a people singular, esteeming no lawes but their owne: and therefore setting light by the kings lawes, they are alwaies readie to rebell, and so much the more to be feared, that being mingled euery where among the kings subjects in all his Provinces, they are a bad example for the rest to stir up any sedition. The last poynt of this accusation is most false, and other things also are brought to set a colour to deceiue the king, and to make them suspected of rebellion. Hee objecteth their calamity as a reproach, that they were dispersed into sundrie Provinces,

although this had bene done of purpose,  
and certaine aduise by them, and not ra-  
ther by the violence of those by who they  
were lead into captiuitie, & so dispearfed,  
according to those threatnings which  
many ages before, god had threatned vn-  
to them, if they rebelled against him and  
his lawes by *Moses*, and other Prophets.  
*Deut. 32.* That which hee telleth that  
they are seuered from the lawes of al peo-  
ple, respecteth their religion, whereby  
God had distinguished them from all o-  
ther people, and did prescribe vnto them  
holy and diuine lawes, that they might  
serue him according vnto his will. For as  
touching the lawes ciuill and statutes po-  
liticque, they could vse none other but  
the kings, vnlesse they were permitted  
by the king, to liue according to their  
owne manners and customes. So that hee  
reprooueth and accuseth them of that  
wherof they did most glorie before God,  
and which they esteemed as their greatest  
praise, that they were segregated by  
God, as his proper treasure and store:  
that they might bee his holy nation,  
a people set at libertie, and parte  
of his inheritance: and that he had giuen  
them



them from heauē most holy lawes, which should be their wisdom, as *Moses* saith. For the lawes of other people concerning religion, were meer folly and abhominatiō before God, for their idolatrie and impietie. But so vs the blinde and ignorant to object vnto the people of God as a fault, their holinesse, their beautie, and finally the heavenly doctrine which they haue from God. Last of all hee accuseth them as disobedient to the kings lawes, which was most false, vnlesse peraduenture maliciously hee impute the private fact of *Murdochus* to the whole nation, and that in a thing so iust, to wit, that he gaue not the honor due vnto the immortal God alone, to a mortall creature. By this accusation it appeareth, that the Iewi though they were captiues, had nothing to do with the idolatrie of the Gentiles, but obserued their sacred ceremonies, as circumcision, the Sabbath, choise of meates, and of other cleane things which were commanded by the lawe of God. And it seemeth that this was granted vnto them, or at the least suffered by the kings, who therein were more fauourable vnto their poore subiects, then the idola-

trous

trous kings of our age, who cannot by any meanes abide those that professe true godlinesse. For who knoweth not but that the enemies of the Church, doo vse the same speeches with *Haman*, and are carried away by the same spirit? For if the faithfull endeavour to depend vpon the voyce alone of the son of God, which is the Gospell, are they not by and by accused of singularitie, sedition, contempt, obstinacie, saucinesse, and selfe conceit? Are they not accused as contemners of lawes, and the constitutions of all antiquitie, of the Councels, Fathers, and especially of the See of *Rome*, which they haue lifted vp above the seate of Christ: and finally as rebelles against kings and their lawes and statutes? But I pray you, wherefore? Forsooth because they refuse to worship that Antichrist of *Rome*, and serue his Idoles, and to preferre his constitutions before the commandements of Christ Iesus as they do. So wee see the malice and wickednesse of *Haman* and his bloudie mind, as yet to remaine in the mouthes and hearts of the capitall enemies of the Church.

But yet notwithstanding, let vs giue

N

exceeding



Exceeding great thanks to our good and gracious God, who at the last made it manifest, that the king had none more stubborne and disobedient and rebellious, then those who accused the Church of rebellion. For how commeth it to passe, that at this day the Leaguers rise so rebelliously against the king, but that they are bewitched with the false doctrine of the Pope? Do they not sufficiently shewe, that they haue onely hitherto abused y<sup>e</sup> kings name, that they might wrongfully accuse vs? Is it not abundantly experienced that they cared not for the king edicts, but so farre forth as they abused them to oppresse vs? Nay, what Edicts haue not these good Catholickes despised, but those which haue bene wrested from the king to destroy religion?

Now that which they blame vs for, that wee will not bee present in their Ecclesiasticall assemblies and Churches, and obserue the same ceremonies and rites with them, is it not rather contrariwise a most high praise vnto vs, that we will not come into any fellowship with those superstitious and idolatrous rites wherewith their Churches are stuffed?

And

And let thus much be spoken of *Hamans* accusation against the people of God. Let vs heare now his bloudie cōclusion: It is not profitable for the king to suffer them: If it seeme good vnto the king, let it bee decreed that they may be destroyed, and I will weigh ten thousand talents of siluer into the hands of those who shall be appoynted to this businesse, that they may bring it into the kings treasure. If the accusation had bene true; the former parte of it seemed cleare enough. For it is not expedient for States to tollerate a part of their subiects, which should contemne & cast aside good lawes. But yet that followeth not which *Haman* inferreth, that they shall bee destroyed with a generall massacre. There are other waies more moderate, wherby those who obey not good lawes as they shuld, may bee corrected and amended, which are to be followed, rather then at once to destroy them all. In that he saith, *It is not profitable for the king*, he hath respect vnto that common speech, that but one kind of religion only is to be suffered in one kingdom, that the diuersitie of religion is the cause of sedition and war, that the people which liue after their own fashion, will easily rebel and reuolt vnto the enemies of the kingdom.



Exo. 1, 10

Thus sayd that stubborn *Pharao*, when in the counsell of his states, they coneluded, that the *Israelites* were to bee oppressed with hard bondage.

Dan. 3

And againe, the purpose and determination of *Nabuchadnezzar*, in erecting that great golden Image, to establish one onely religion in his whole Empire. But the experience of al times hath made it manifest, as euen at this day it also doth, that true religion is not the cause of stirres and troubles, but the malice of them that cannot abide it. Indeed false religions doo easily beare one an other, but all hate the true: for truth and lying cannot stand together. For who knoweth not how many sects of Monkes the Church of *Rome* doth nourish, what diuersities of opinions, which yet defend one an other, and that only vpon an hatred of the truth, and in that consent whereby they acknowledge one Head, who easily tollerateth all errors and disordered orders, so that they yeeld him faith and obedience, but cannot in any wise abide the truth, whereby his pride may bee detected? yet is this a most pleasing voyce, and acceptable vnto all, that there ought to be one King, one

Faith,

Faith, one Lawe. And indeed it is a most excellent saying so that it be well vnderstood: but when error is placed in steed of faith, and abuse for law, and a tyrant for a King, that vnion and vnitie which is so much desired, is turned into a miserable destruction & scattering of true doctrine. Furthermore, that sentēce is so far of from being true, that it is hurtfull and damageable to kings, to suffer in their Kingdoms Gods people professing pure doctrine, that on the contrary, it is most profitable, and their preservation dependeth vpon it. For God doth preserve the world for his elects sake, although wicked men perswade themselves, that the faithfull are the cause of all calamities and euill. Inso-much as that which *Haman* thought was not profitable for King *Assuerus*, was the commoditie and glory, yea and the preservation and defence of his Kingdome. For did not *Mardocheus* disclose that cōspiracie which was made against the king, and by his wisdom preserved him from it?

And therefore so much the more is the conclusion of *Haman* to be condemned, that the whole Nation of the Iewes was



to be destroyed : and so much the more his froward malice to be abhorred , that perceiuing his request to be vniust, he promisseth tenne thousand tallents of siluer, whereby the losse might bee supplied, which it seemed the King should sustaine by the slaughter of the Iewes. So that he sufficiently sawe his purpose was voyd of all humanitie, & damageable to the kings reuenues, and therefore he promisseth to recompence that losse with the sum of 10000 tallents of siluer. And by this reason it appeareth how thirstie he was of the blood of these wretched men, when he endeuoureth to buye it, hee careth not with what sum : and goeth about to deceiue the King in faigning himselfe to be most carefull of his profit, in as much as he sticketh not to bestowe so great a sum, from which there shall arise a double profit to the King, both by making away that stubborne and rebellious people, and by encreasing the Kings treasure by such an heape of siluer: in such sort do the wicked account nothing so deare or pretious, which they will not willingly bestowe on the destructiō of the Church. Some there are that thinke that *Haman* did not offer  
this

this summe of his own, but of the spoyles  
of the Iewes; and that he was not so pro-  
digall, that he would buye their bloud at  
so deare a price, whome hee esteemed no  
better then dogs; as for the most part, Ido-  
laters are wont to set light by the bloud  
of the faithfull: but by the comparing of  
this place, with those things which are  
after spoken in the 13. verse, of taking the  
spoyle of the Iewes, and with those things  
which are set downe in the 7. verse of  
the next Chapter, that *Haman* had promi-  
sed to pay that summe of siluer into the  
Kings treasure, for the Iewes, to destroy  
them, it appeareth sufficiently, that he of-  
fered this sum of his owne. For otherwise  
to what purpose shuld a subiect offer such  
a sum vnto his King, of the spoyle of sub-  
iects? Therefore althogh the enemies of the  
Church be exceeding couetous, yet the  
desire of reuenge, and that deadly hatred  
wherewith they are driuen, doo compell  
them to any prodigallitie, so that they may  
shed the bloud of the faithfull at thei-  
r pleasures. This is apparant in the Ro-  
mane Cleargie, whose insatiable coue-  
tousnesse is knowne vnto euery man;  
yet they spare not any cost, to sollicite



Kings, and set them on to the slaughter of the godly: buying their blood with the greatest & most precious part of their Ecclesiastiall revenues. And the people also being bewitched with the importune cries of false teachers and Iesuites, do willingly spend part of their goods, so that religion may vtterly be abolished and destroyed: with such and so great hatred, which by no meanes can bee appeased, doth the world fight against Gods people and his truth: so *Satan* speweth out his rage and venome against the Church, by his ministers: and so is the blood of the faithfull solde for ready mony. But God forbid that we should grudge at this, when we know that Christ Iesus our Lord was so betrayed, and sold for a certaine sum of mony. And this is *Hamans* opinion for the destruction of the nation of the Iewes. Let vs then go forward to the kings answer, in which his exceeding great inabilitie and vnskilfulnesse is seen: for without any contradiction, taking his Ring from his finger, he gave it to *Haman* the son of *Hammedatha*, the *Agagite*, that would oppresse the Iewes: & besides, he said to *Haman*, that he giue him all that siluer, & besides that people also, to

do with them as seemeth good in his eyes. The ring is giuen him in sign of the authoritie & power which he receiued of the King, to vse as shuld seeme good vnto him. And this further appeareth, in that hee giueth him the mony offered, & permitteth him to vse his pleasure with the people. So we see, that *Pharao* but in a lawfull cause, when he wold giue absolute authoritie vnto *Joseph* in his Kingdome, to dispose all things as he pleased, gaue vnto him his Ring. But what shal we most wonder at in this blockish king? whether that hee gaue ouer his power to an other, and him a stranger, or that so rashly he admitteth his accusation? or that so cruelly he condemneth so many innocents, and gaue their goods for a pray: or that without any mans aduise nor hearing the accused, neither making any inquisition of the cause, hee deliuereth ouer so headdily so many thousand men, to so bloudie a slaughter? Gen. 41.  
42.

Kings ought to bee a liuing lawe, a sanctuary for the afflicted, a helpe to the oppressed, the Image of God on earth, and a defence and comfort of the wretched and those in calamitie.

What then will come to passe, when



Kings giue eare onely to false accusers, haue vnmercifull eyes, inhumane hearts, mindes without reason, iudgement without equitie or right? Are they not then rather the enemies of mankind, the destruction of lawe, the subersion of iustice, the supporters of the wicked, the instruments of iniustice, and the vtter desolation of all good? Such an one here *Assuerus* shewes himselfe to be, not only voyd of all iustice, reason and equitie: but also of all common sence and humanitie. But so for the most part it commeth to passe in the affaires of the Church, so there be any that will accuse, the eares of Princes are open to any accusation: if the question be of the vtter destruction of it, it shall be decreed: but in other things, in the least trifles, euen in the death of dogges, there will bee some sticking at the matter: but the people of God with the Princes of this world, are no more esteemed then the offscouring and refuse of the whole world. But why should we maruel at this, when *Barrabas* was preferred before our Lord and Saviour?

Against the eues there is obserued a due course of law, neither are the guiltie condemned,

demned, their cause not being heard. Many times the seditious and rebellious multitude are spared by reason of their great number: and because that euen, very nature, abhorred the slaughter of so many, yea though they haue deserued it: yea, and the most raging enemies after the heate of the battell, are wont to spare those whom they haue ouercome, though they were iniured by them: but this vnmanlike king in the midst of peace, not being iniured, no man cōplaining but one priuate slaunderer, doth deliuer ouer a whole nation, to the number of some two or three hundred thousand persons, to a bloody death and butchery. How truly was it said, that the tongue of the slaunderer is worse then Serpents, then the poyson of Aspes, sharper then any two-edged sword, and more deadly then the biting of any the most sauage beast: And that kings voyde of counsel & wisdom, are the plague and ruine of mankind: It is also a matter of great momēt to the whole state, what maner of friends and Counsellours Princes haue: for if they be wicked, there can none other thing bee looked for from them, but euill counsell, to the damage of the subiects.

Wherefore



Wherefore those people are indeed wise, who by their lawes prescribe vnto their Princes, a certaine number of wise men for their counsell: but ambition and tyrannie cannot long beare any good and stayed counsell.

Last of all, heere-hence wee perceiue, our of what fountaine the most bloudie persecutions of the Church doo spring, to wit, partly from the malice of certaine wicked counsellors, who breathe out nothing but blood and fire, and partly from the inabilitytie or rather blockishnesse of Kings, who making no enquire of the truth, deliuer ouer Gods people to their bloodie butcherie. Such is the state and condition of the Church vnder vnfaithfull kings, & namely those who giue care vnto euill Counsellors. So haue our miserable Churches in *France*, bene oftentimes set open to the lust of most bloudie cutthroates, by reason of the rage of wicked Counsellours, and the over-light credulitie of kings.

Hence therefore let vs learne, not to trust in any earthly Prince, but in God alone, who so oft hath deliuered vs from the furie of so many most cruell enemies:

who also alone both can and will saue all those who lie vnto him in the name of his son our Lord Christ Iesus, to whom alone, be all glorie and dominion for euermore. Amen.

## THE TENTH Sermon.

*How the day is appointed for the utter destruction of the Iewes, and how the proclamation was published throughout all the Prouinces of the Empire of Assuerus, from the 12. verse, vnto the end of the Chapter.*

12. Then were the kings Scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written (according vnto al that Haman commaunded) vnto the kings officers, and vnto the Captaines that were ouer euery Prouince, and to the Rulers of euery people, to euery Prouince according to the writing thereof, and to euery people according to their language: in the name of the king Assuerus was it writtē,  
and



and sealed with the kings ring.

13. And the letters was sent by Postes into all the kings Prouinces, to roote out, to kill and to destroy all the Iewes, both yong and olde, children and women, in one day, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth, (which is the moneth Adar) and to spoyle them as a pray.

14. The contents of this writing was, that there should be given a commandement in all Prouinces, and published to all people: that they should be readie against the same day.

15. And the Postes went forth with speed, with the kings commandement, and the commandement was given in the Pallace at Susa: and the king and Haman sat drinking, but the Citie of Susa was in perplexitie.

The

**T**He distressed Church of God can neuer sufficiently consider how great the malice of their enemies is, nor how great are the daungers which do compass her about; wherof it commeth, that neither is she warie enough for her selfe, neither sufficiently carefull to call for necessarie ayde and helpe at Gods hand, for as the Apostle saith: *Wee are accounted as sheep appoynted for the slaughter: or as Ieremie professeth concerning himselfe, We are as an Oxe in the stall, of whose slaughter men aduise.*

Rom. 8.36

Ier. 18.23

& 26.11

Of which thing wee haue heere a most memorable example: for whiles the poore people of the Iewes disperseed through all Prouinces of the Kingdome of *Assuerus*, thinke to bee in safetie, and liue secure vnder the custodie of the Lawes and protection of publicque authoritie, beholde their enemy *Haman*, without delaye speedily vrgeth, that the Kings Edict of destroying the Iewes, be written according to his mind, and that all things may bee performed without stop,



stop for the vtter destruction of them, in  
 so much that their name may bee abol-  
 shed from among men, and no mention  
 euer after made of them. Therefore it is  
 heere declared, how the kings Scribes  
 wrote the Edict according to *Haman*'s  
 pleasure and direction, in authentickall  
 forme, verse 12. Then what were the  
 contents thereof, verse 13. and 14. and  
 at last, how it was made knowne vnto all  
 Prouinces by Postes, and published at  
*Susa*, whiles the king and *Haman* sat drink-  
 ing, in the last verse. In which thing, as  
 in a glasse, wee beholde how great dili-  
 gence and celeritie euery one vseth in ex-  
 ecuting those bloudie Edicts, whereby  
 vtter destruction is prepared for the  
 Church: The king he giues ouer all his  
 authoritie to *Haman*; the Scribes they  
 write with speed the bloudie proclama-  
 tion; the Postes they quickly carrie  
 it into all partes; all men are readie  
 against the day of slaughter; and *Haman*  
 hauing all things perfected to his wish, sit-  
 teth drinking with the king. This Histo-  
 rie is worthie to be diligently weighed:  
 for it containeth a liuely pattern of those  
 things which haue happened in our age.

First

First then the Kings Scribes are called, as soone as the King hath giuen his assent: least perhappes the matter beeing better thought on, there might be left a place for repentance, and occasion to call backe again, that which ouer-rashly he had granted: and so eyther himselfe thinking better vpon it, or else warned by some other, should take some newe aduise concerning so barbarous and bloudie a graunt. So the wicked are wont to yrge Kings, and to bee instant vpon them in a wicked purpose, that there may bee left them neither time nor place to deliberate of it.

And thus are the Scribes called, not to deliberate of the whole matter, but onely to write those things which *Haman* shuld commaund: to be sent to the Kings Nobles, and to the Captaines that were in euery Prouince, and to the rulers of euery people, and to euery people according to their tongues: that is in breefe, to all which in euery Prouince had any authoritie. For the Nobles were his Liefetenants generall, the Captaines were the gouernors vnder them, the rulers were those which in euery Citie, & in all meetings of the people were in greatest estimation



estimation and credit. *Hamans* ende and purpose was, that all sorts of men should doo their carefull endeuour in accomplishing that bloudie Edict, which was so guarded with the Kings name, and sealed with the Kings Ring, which was in steed of those great scales which our Kings at this day vse. So for the most part we see it to come to passe, that those who are placed in the gouernmēt of the Cōmon wealth, for the defence of good men, the protection of lawes, and preservation of publique peace, do often times (kings being caried away with euil counsellours) bestow their labour in murthering and massacring the most quiet & peaceable subiects, making no enquire before whether it bee done by right or wrong, to whom it is inough to say: Thus it was the Kings pleasure: neither are they mindful that they are called to that place not to serue the Princes lust, who as other men, is mortall; but to serue the lawes, and render to euery one that which is theirs. Wherefore that saying of an Emperour of *Rome* is greatly to be prayed, who deliuering vnto the Generall of his horsemen the sword into his hand, spake vnto him these words: Vse  
this

*Traiane.*

this for mee, if I commaund that which is right: and against me, if I command that which is vniust. But the tyrannous will, or rather lust of many Princes, challēgeth the force of lawe, and to be the rule of equitie, although euen in iest they deliberate of most vniust matters.

The Scribes againe on the other part, yeeld themselves most obedient to *Haman*, and obiekt nothing against so bloudy and violent an Ediēt: they would not forsooth displease the King. Nothing also in so cruell a proclamation seemeth yniust or vnlawfull to the Nobles and Captains, but they are ready to fulfill it. So in our age, if Ediēts were to bee penned against religion, the Scribes could neuer satisfie themselves in deuising significant words, to make them more haynous and cruell: the Gouvernours without any exception, were ready with all their might seuerely to obserue them: and the people receiued them with al ioy and gladnes. And as here al things were written in the kings name, and sealed with the Kings seale: so in our age, the colleequed enemies of the church and true religion, with great cries and open mouth, pretended still the kings name



and maiestie, and haue vfed his forces and the common treasure to the oppressing thereof: running as it were to quench a fire that would bring destruction to the whole Realm. Lo then how this Edict was written in authentickall forme, according to *Hamans* will and lust.

Let vs come now to those things that were contained therein, for of the manner how it came and was dispersed into the Prouinces, we will speake after in the 15. verse. The Proclamation containeth two principall poynts.

The former is, the killing of all Iewes, without sparing or making difference, and that all together vpon one appointed day; and the spoyling of their goods as a pray.

The other, that this decree be made knowne vnto all Prouinces, that all men might be ready against the day prefixed to commit so bloody a slaughter. As concerning the former: *Haman* is not contented with the common worde of killing the Iewes, but that he might the better lay open his cruell and bloud-thirsty mind, he saith that they should bee rooted out, slaine, and destroyed: and that there should  
not

not any place be left for manhood or pietie, wherewith moued men at least might spare infants, he maketh mention of euery one seuerally as well *young as olde, little children as women.*

This butcherie is appointed vpon one and the same day, that with greater pleasure he might wallowe in abundance of blood, flowing from al places at one time; and that the cut-throatēs in euery place might the more bee stirred vp vnto that horrible slaughter: nay farther, that they may not spare any, the goods of those that are slaine, are set open for a pray to bee spoyled, that euery one hauing this reward promised, might runne vnto that slaughter, with a barbarous and vbridled furie.

If any man demaund with what shew of reason so detestable a fact could bee shadowed, the answer is easie, vpon *Hammans* accusation they were condemned, as contemners of the Kings lawes, and religion.

Finally, the hatred of God and of true religion, was a sufficient incitement vnto them to commit so bestiall a massacre. Paraduventure it may seeme strange and



incredible that so bloudie a decree could bee made, when the most enraged enemies and most bloudie, are wont in warres to spare women & children, vnlesse euen in our owne age we had seene farre more cruell things then these: not onely to haue bene deliberated of, and decreed by those who brag that they are Christians, but also to haue bene executed with so great and so barbarous rage by them, that euen a mans heart will quake onely to remember it. For if any man call to remembrance that arrest of Parliament made at *Aix* against the inhabitants of *Cabriers*, and *Merindoll*, about some 44. yeares ago; and also that most horrible butcherie begunne at *Paris* the 24. of August, 1572. and afterward spread into the other Cities of *France*, he must needes bee driuen to confesse, that these were so cruell that they passed all others, and this last so barbarous that it turneth away mens eyes from all others, vnto that alone: the crueltie was so fierce and vnheard of before, that none can sufficiently wonder at it, and bee moued with horror, who haue but onely heard the report thereof.

For

For what kinde of crueltie was there not executed with more then diuellish rage against men of all ages, qualitie, and sexe? what villanies omitted against those that were flaine? with what flanders were they not euen ouerwhelmed, that they might be accounted euen detestable after their death?

But by whom (I beseech you consider) were those horrible & sauage slaughters committed? not by straungers, not by sauage people and Canibals, but by their fellow-Citizens, their neighbours, their alliance, by them who but the day before did testify their friendship by their oathes. But at what time was this lamentable slaughter executed? In the midst of a publique peace, with most solemn rites proclaimed and sworne vnto, vnder the glorious pretence of marriage and feasts royall, whē all ioy did seeme to be hoped for. By what means? Euen by the most trecherous & traiterous practises, that euer the most faithlesse did vse. Vnder what pretence of Christianitie, zeale, religion. O infernal & hellish zeale! ô diuellish religiō which teacheth to murther so cruelly, so treacherously, those who only call on the name of Christ Iesus!

O 4 And



And yet notwithstanding, so barbarous, so impudent is the superstition of the servants of Antichrist, that all the Preachers of the Church of *Rome* haue extolled with most high commendation euen vnto heauen so barbarous a butchery, as an holy and meritorious worke: and after did neuer make an ende of exhorting the people to newe slaughters by their seditious outcries, neither ceased they vntill they had againe kindled a new fire of ciuill warre.

And the greatest part of the people, being seasoned or tainted rather with so pestilent doctrine, delighted in that sauage butchery: and were sorie they could not commit greater cruelties, or that any of the faithfull should escape their bloudie fingers.

For this purpose not many yeares past was that League made among the conspiratours, who assembled themselves, and bound themselves by oath, to oppresse, spoyle and destroy the rest of the Church, not onely in *France* or *England*, but in all places of the world, where the name of Christ Iesus is purely called on, and his Gospell sincerely taught.

And

And to this end indeed are all the desires, counsellcs, deceits, treacheries and ende- uours of the Romane Antichrist directed, that by this meanes he may restore his de- cayed tyrannie. And who euen yet at this day, do moue y<sup>e</sup> body of the League with- out a head, so furiously, but those fire brāds which are sent from the Pope, stirring vp in the mindes of all those who giue eare vnto them, a deadly hatred against the Gospel, vnder the name of heresie, which they falsely lay vpon it : and a desire of destroying and rooting out, yea euen ra- sing the memorie from amongst men of all those who do professe it ?

Therefore *Haman* is not yet dead, but his cruell minde reuiueth in an infinit number of men, who beeing bewitched with the blasphemous voyces of Anti- christ, craftily coloured, perswade them- selues, that there is none other zeale, no other godlines, but in sheading the bloud of all those who consent not to their im- pieties : yea also of those, though they be Papists, who allow not of the crueltie & furie of the Leagurs ; so that they haue not spared euen their King and his offi- cers.



And if the Lord himselfe had not cut in  
 sunder all the cordes of the vngodly, and  
 shut the mouthes of the cruell Lyons, so  
 cunningly & so deceitfully had they cou-  
 ched all their fraudes and guiles, that there  
 was not any hope left to escape their traps.  
 But, blessed be the Lord, who hath not  
 suffered that these wicked & cruel beasts  
 should deuour as they hoped his people,  
 whom they had caught in their clawes,  
 and euen rent them with their most fierce  
 teeth.

They had eue already deuided the spoiles  
 of the poore faithfull ones, and laid holde  
 on their goods, but the Lord who hath  
 stricken their Head, is euen now ready to  
 demandaun an account of so many slaugh-  
 ters committed by them, and to reuenge  
 it. And thus farre touching the first part of  
 the Edict.

The other point is, that the contents  
 of this writing, should be made knowne to all  
 People and Proninces; that they might  
 all bee prepared against that day, that is,  
 that the cut-throates in all coastes should  
 be ready to set vpon the Iewes and to kill  
 them.

So that this execution should bee  
 done

done without any forme of iudgement.

For, I pray, what order or shewe of law was obserued against these poore innocents? All things then were to bee done with open force and armed hand, as most times there want not ministers of such cruelties, especially if the goods of those that are executed, may remaine as a pray for such cut-throates.

But what a confusion is that, and what disturbing of order, so to allure, and accustom the people to slaughter? Is not this the meanes to open the way to new seditions, to lay forth the lawes to bee troden under foote by all men, to teach men, to be light by the bloud and life of men, and to flesh the wicked and leaud persons in robbery & violence? But without this is the confusion of all things brought in, without care are the lawes both diuine & humane broken, without care is the law of nations & nature trode vnder foot, so that they may take reuenge of their enemies, and true religion may be destroyed, with that fauor it. Now if any shuld take exceptions, that this Edict being so speedily put out, did giue warning to the Iewes, speedily



speedily to provide for their safetie by flight. I answered, there was also as speedily provided that there should bee no place for them to escape. For whither I pray, could those miserable Captiues flee with their families, beeing enuironed on euery side with so many enemies? For from the time that decrees are pulished against the poore faithfull, there is none dares shewe himselfe a friend vnto them: all men are enemies in aduersitie.

The Kings voyce is as thunder, where with euen the most stout are feared. When then wil wonder that there was no mean for the poore Iewes being thus condemned to escape: when as it is rather to be marvelled at, how their enemies held themselves backe, but that they had assured them before the day prefixed, that they might the sooner enioy the spoyle as wee see that holy-hunger of gold driues men to commit any mischief? But God did watch for the safegarde of the poore Captiues, from whom being iniuriously condemned, hee did turne the euill vpon their enemies.

Here we are to hold for certaine, that God doth often suffer his Church to be plunged

plunged into so great dangers, as it seemeth in the iudgement of man, impossible to get out of them, that thereby the deliuerance thereof, may bee the more knowne and famous in the whole world.

So *Pharoes* hoste hemmed in the *Is- Exod. 14*  
*raelites* on euery side at the redde Sea, to  
 whom God gaue a deliuerance through  
 the middest of the Sea. So *Rabsake* be- 2. King.  
 sieged *Ierusalem* very straightly, without 19. 35.  
 hope of helpe from any mortall man, that  
 his power who punished from heauen  
 by the hand of an Angell, by whom in  
 one night the hoste of this blasphemer  
 was slaine before *Libna*, might be so much  
 the more renowned among Gods peo-  
 ple, and more feared among all other. So  
 in our dayes we haue seene not a fewe of  
 these deliuerances, though not by the like  
 miracle or so apparantly. Hence we learn  
 to hope for an issue out of so many euilles  
 wherewith we are oppressed by those who  
 haue conspired against vs, who now rage  
 more furiously then at any time before.  
 And thus farre of the contents of the E-  
 dict.

Furthermore, this Edict thus compo-  
 sed



sed according to *Hamans* pleasure, is carried by the swiftest postes into all Provinces, by the Kings commaundement, & the decree is first published in *Susa*, the chiefe Citie. The king vrgeth this matter, as though it concerned his Crowne, or the defence of the State of the whole Empire, as though the enemies were at the gates. So it commeth to passe, that the mischief begun by the wicked against the Church, encreaseth as it goeth: and the wicked wil of vngodly men, alwaies runneth into the woorit, so that they neuer giue rest neyther to themselves nor others, vntill they haue brought their vngracious purpose to an end.

This vnwise King, is not ashamed to publish euery where his iniustice, & more then barbarous crueltie, and to sollicite his subiects to accomplish it: he little regardeth the iudgement of posteritie against him, neither careth what may follow among his subiects, of so inhumane a fact: so much can the words of those preuaile, who daily perswade Kings to new slaughters.

Finally, the King and *Haman* are said to sit drinking when the inhabitants of

*Susa*

Susa were in perplexitie; that is, they gaue themselves to banquetting and quaffing, after the proclayming of this bloudie decree, when in the meane while, those in whom there was any sparke of humanitie, were troubled at it, and the poore Iewes mourned with teares and lamentation.

These things are added to depaint vnto vs in fewe words, the nature and disposition of the enemies of the Church, who are neuer more merrie, neither at any time giue themselves more vnto banquets and drinking, then when they see her destruction to be confirmed. And this is a horrible sencelesnesse, wherewith Satan hath blinded them in the middest of their malice, that they should not feele it or be displeased with themselves for it, which were a beginning of health and conuersion. Especially consider the peruerse and wicked craft of *Haman*, who imployeth the King with delights & banquets, least perhaps at leisure he might consider in his minde that euill, whereunto he had beene solicited by *Haman*, and repent of the doing thereof.

This wicked man also drownes himselfe in delights, because he knewe the decree



decree was irrevocable, and thinketh that there was an ende of the Iewes, and there remained no hope of helpe for them.

In like sort that *Haman* of ours did onely talk of feasting, did onely thirst after mens bloud, wherein he hoped that he and his shuld wade even vnto the girdles, after he had obtained that Edict of the States, confirmed by an oath, & set down as a fundamentall lawe of the Kingdome, for the killing of all that professed the Christian religion.

So we see that to haue beene true in all ages, which our Lord and Sauour Iesus Christ said to his Apostles, *The world shall laugh, but you shall weep: yea those who kill you, will thinke they doo God seruice.*  
*Io. 16. 20. 2.* So our Lord Iesus Christ hanging on the  
*Mat. 27.* 39. Crosse, all his enemies reioyced, and  
*Marc. 6.* mockes and scoffes derided him. Whiles  
 27. *Herode* with his Courtiers banquet themselves, *John Baptist* is beheaded in the prison. The Papists were neuer merrier then when they knewe that the decree was confirmed to roote out, and to destroy all those that professed the reformed religion.

But let vs learne that it is an haynous sin  
and crueltie to reioyce at the euilles of  
the Church: for which cause, God by his  
Prophet *Ezekiel*, doth denounce destru- *Ezek. 20.*  
tion and ouerthrow, not onely to the na- *vnto Chap.*  
tions who spoyled *Iden* and *Ierusalem*, *34.*  
but vnto all those who were glad at their  
desolation. For which cause also *Obadiab* *Obad. v. 12.*  
the Prophet, threatened horrible iudge-  
ments to the *Edomites*. Nay let vs know  
moreouer, that we offend greatly by inhu-  
manitie, if when the people of God suf-  
fer, we be not moued, but follow delights,  
and banquet as though all things were wel:  
For we are warned to weep with them *but* *Rom. 12.*  
weep; that we must sorrow for the affliction *15.*  
of *Ioseph*: that wee must suffer with those *Amos. 6. 6.*  
that are in bonds, euen as if we our selues were *Heb. 13. 3.*  
bound. Wherefore a curse is denounced  
vnto those among the *Iewes*, who gaue  
themselues to drinking and wantonness,  
whiles the tenne Tribes, which are meant  
by the name of *Ioseph*, in the place which  
before I alleadged of the Prophet *Amos*,  
were ledde away Captiues and destroyed.  
Therefore the *Leuites*, being captiues in *Ba-* *Psal. 137. 4.*  
*bylon* do testifie, that they wil not reioyce *2. Sa. 11. 11.*  
and be merrie vntil they heare of the resti-

P cution



**The tenth Sermon**

of **Ierusalem**. Also **Kris** would not  
go downe to his house to sleepe, because  
the **Ark** of **God** and the hoste remained  
in tents, and were in danger of war. Where-  
fore the blockishnesse and senselesnesse of  
many is wonderfull in these dayes, who  
are not moved with common calamities,  
where with the Churches of **France** and  
**Flanders** are oppressed, and it is greatly to  
be feared, lest those who thus delight  
themselues whilst others weepe, being  
deaf to the complaints of their brethren,  
shall haue their own turne come at last: and  
haue their crosse so much the more grie-  
uous, by how much the more they haue bin  
hardned at others calamities. Go too then,  
let vs beare pitifull minds, and let vs helpe  
one another with mutuall benefits, & di-  
ties of charitie whereby in the day of visi-  
tation, our stroke may be the lighter: or  
else we may be altogether deliuered from  
the euil dayes, and reuenge of **Gods** wrath  
that continually dooing good, we may re-  
ioyce in his saluation, through **Iesu**  
**Christ** our Lord, to whom be glory for-  
euer. Amen.

# THE ELEVENTH

## Sermon

Mardocheus first fleeth unto a God, af-  
ter to the intercession of Ester, taking  
Assuerus: in the eight first verses of  
the fourth Chapter.

### CHAP. IIII.

1. Now when Mordecai knew all that was  
done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on  
sackcloth and ashes: and went out into the  
middest of the Citie, and cryed with a great  
crie, and a bitter.
2. And he came euen before the Kings gate,  
but he might not enter into the Kings gate,  
being clothed with sackcloth.
3. And in euery Province and place, whither  
the Kings charge and his commission came,  
there was great sorrow among the Iewes,  
and fasting and weeping, and mourning, and  
many lay in sackcloth and ashes.



4. Then Esters maides and her Eunuches came and told it her: therefore the Queene was very heauie, and she sent rayment to cloath Mordecai, and to take away his Sackcloth from him, but hee receiued it not.
5. Then called Ester Hatach one of the kings Eunuches, whom he had appointed to serue her, and gaue him a commandement vnto Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.
6. So Hatach went forth to Mordecai vnto the street of the Citie, who was before the kings gate.
7. And Mordecai tolde him of all that had come vnto him, and of the summe of the siluer that Haman had promised to pay vnto the Kings treasures, because of the Iewes for to destroy them.
8. Also he gaue him the copie of the writing and commission that was giuen at Susa, to destroy them; that he might shew it vnto Ester, and declare it vnto her, and to charge her that she should goe in vnto the King, and make her petition and supplication before him for her people.

**W**E have heard how great a perill  
and destruction was prepared  
for the Iewes, that were disper-  
sed through all the Prouinces of the Per-  
sian Empire, as well by the malice of *Ha-  
man*, as by the negligence and iniustice of  
the King, yet not without Gods determi-  
nation and iust decree, who so would ex-  
ercise his, that his power might shine in  
their weakenesse; his glory in their deli-  
uerance; and his iustice in reuenge a-  
gainst his and their enemies: which  
things wee shall bee taught in the foure  
Chapters which followe in this holy Hi-  
storie.

In this Chapter is shewed to what  
remedies *Mardocheus* had recourse, that  
he might be deliuered from these distres-  
ses: to wit, to God first, in fasting and  
prayer: and then to the King by the  
intercession of *Ester*; vnto which shee  
giueth not her assent without some  
stay.

This doctrine is very necessarie for  
vs, that we may know both in our pub-  
lique and priuate calamities whatsoeuer  
that growe vnto vs, by what means they



may be overcome : to wit, that after the  
 example of *Mardocheus*; and the rest of  
 the whole people of the Iewes, we humbly  
 flee vnto the grace and mercie of God:  
 then, if any way be opened vnto vs, either  
 by our innocencie may be made knowne,  
 and the hearts of the oppressors turned,  
 by the means of those who are in authori-  
 tie and fauour, that we wisely followe at,  
 placing nevertheless our whole hope in  
 the Lord. Now then let vs see how *Mardo-  
 cheus* behaued himselfe in both these  
 doctines, not onely having care and regard  
 of himselfe, but also of his whole Nation,  
 that it might be deliuered from that blou-  
 die butcherie.

And first therefore it is set downe, that  
*Mardocheus* when he knew what was done,  
 that his lord the king had covered himselfe with  
 sackcloth and ashes, and went through the  
 Citie crying out with a great cry and a bit-  
 ter. Whereunto let vs ioyne, that which  
 was done by the rest of the Iewes, who  
 heard the decree, That there was great sor-  
 row among them, fasting and weeping, and  
 mourning, as also many lay in sackcloth and a-  
 shes, as in the third verse is said. By here-  
 hence it appeareth, that the Edict was

upon the booke of Ester.

not so secret among a few, but that at the least it was so spread abroad, that the Jewes were certified thereof, yea and had a copie of it. which is not, and is to be thought, it seemeth very likely, that it was not yet openly proclaimed, seeing that neither Ester, nor those who attended her, knew any thing thereof, as is easily gathered out of the fourth and fift verses. Besides it is gathered by that, that seeing the decrees of the Persians were irrevocable, there could not but great confusion arise throughout the whole Empire, by the decree granted to the Jewes to defend themselves: when others also had commaundement to invade and destroy them.

Whatsoever was done, Mardocheus had intelligence of the whole matter, and also the Jewes in the Provinces. God by his secret providence stirring up his, that perceiuing so great a daunger decreed against them, they might flee to his grace and ayde as they did.

For by reason hereof, Mardocheus rent his cloathes, took sackcloth and ashes, with a great crye and a bint crye, and went through the Citie.

Neither is it to be doubted, but hee had



humbled himselfe before God, and had directed his cries, that is, fervent prayers unto him. For otherwise what had that crie of his beene, but disordered outcries and howlings, such as Infidels and brute beasts themselves send forth naturally, when they are pressed with any griefe or sorrow. And I pray what frute could there be of such a crie?

Likewise when as the Jewes dispersed through the Provinces, are said to have cryed out in fasting, weeping, & great mourning, it was before God, before whom they shewed forth such tokens of humilitie, craving his aide and helpe with earnest prayers, and these like signes of repentance. For without prayer, without faith and repentance, what could sackcloth, ashes, weeping, fasting, have prevailed, but onely to increase their contempt and misery?

Heere therefore, first they are worthy commendation, that they take not counsel of flesh and bloud, neither run into despaire, or seeke unlawfull counsellors, as to make an uprore, stirre up sedition, fire the Cities, that at least they might not die without revenge.

Let vs not therefore suffer our selues to be driuen, either by the crueltie or furie of our enemies, or by the greatnes of dangers threatned, to doo any thing against the lawes, or against right and our duties; but let vs patiently expect from God the meanes of our lawfull defense, as heere the Iewes, appointed to the slaughter, yet looking for hope and help from God alone, are a paterne and example vnto vs.

Moreouer we are heere in brieft to obserue what vse and profit cometh of that rearing of the cloathes, of wearing sackcloth & ashes, of weeping, and cries, and lying on the ground: to wit, that all these ought to be the true effects and testimonies of true and earnest repentance, and of true humiliation and casting our selues downe, as well before God, as before Angels and men. Wherefore *Joel*, *Joel. 2. 13.* chap. 2. warned that we should rather rent our hearts than our garments. And *Isai*, *Isai. 58. 4.* chap. 58. cryed, that fasting without repentance is mere hypocrisie: and likewise fasting with opinion of merit, and with desire of being seene in the eyes of men, or with supposall of the seruice of God, *Mat. 6. 16.* is nothing but hypocrisie and wickednes.



Gen. 27.

38.

Heb. 12.

17.

Weeping also and teares without repentance, are of no value before God, which is plaine in the example of *Esau*. Repentance then is at all times a pleasant and acceptable sacrifice vnto God. Prayers, fasting, teares, sackcloth and ashes, are partly the effects of repentance; partly helps and means, whereby wee are moued to the casting downe of our soules, and true humilitie, that wee returne to a better kinde of living.

And although the custome of renting of our clothes, of wearing sackcloth, of sprinkling our heads with ashes, and lying on the ground, be growen out of vse in the Church, yet hath shee retayned fasting, teares, and sighes, as the most conuenient furtherances for our weakenesse, and most becomming the granitic of publicke assemblies. Primarily, it is lawfull for eueryone to vse those meanes whereby hee may be stirred vp to true humilitie and repentance, whether he put on sackcloth, or lye on the ground, putting his mouth in the dust; (as *Jeremie* speaketh) for that he knowe that all this bodily exercise buth little profit, as *Paul* saye h,

Lam. 3.

1. 29.

1. Tim. 4. 8.

Weeping

2 9

saye h,

sayeth, and that hee place not the seruice of God in these exercises, or saig he vnto it an opinion of merit, as vnskilfull men are wont in the Church of Rome. So that when these outward things are referred to their right ends and vse, which is, that wee may be the more cast downe and humbled before God by them, and raysed vp to true repentance, that our zeale may be increased, and our prayers more feruent, then they helpe, and are pleasing and acceptable to God, who, as hee hath created the bodie no lesse then the soule, doth also require to bee serued with both, and in both will haue vs to giue testimonie of earnest repentance and amendment. But wee must especially take care that the contrition and humilitie of the heart, placing his hope and trust in the mercye of God, doe goe before these outward things, after which the confession of our finnes must followe, and an acknowledging of Gods iustice, with earnest prayer, desire of pardon, and deprecation of the deserued punishments: and last of all, an ardent petition of help and defence, to  
the



the glorie of his name. The sprinkling  
 of such a sacrifice, are fastings, sighes and  
 teares: and from that (as from a foun-  
 taine) do these outward things drawe all  
 the dignitie that they haue: but faith,  
 repentance, hope, are the gifts of God,  
 of his meere grace, which receiue all  
 their dignitie from the onely merite of  
 Christ Iesus and his obedience. Where-  
 fore our whole repentance, with all the  
 parts, fruits, and testimonies thereof, are  
 the gifts of God, whose whole merite  
 cometh from that onely sacrifice, which  
 our Lord Iesus Christ offered once vpon  
 the Crosse for vs, by which alone  
 God is appeased, turneth away his wrath  
 from vs, and forgiveth vs our sinnes.  
 Therefore being reconciled vnto God  
 by so excellent a price, our repentance  
 which is the gift of his grace, is pleasing  
 and acceptable vnto him, because that  
 by our humilitie wee magnifie his glo-  
 rie: and by acknowledging of our sinnes  
 wee commend his iustice: and in that  
 wee flee vnto him in the middest of our  
 miseries yea and death, he is acknow-  
 ledged to be the author of life and sal-  
 uation, a gracious, gentle, and merciful  
 God

God. How then can it be but such a repentance shall be acceptable vnto God, when he deferred the sentence of vengeance alreadie giuen against *Achab*, for that he humbled himselfe before God, *I. Reg. 21*  
 although his heart were not sincere and *29.*  
 vpright: and oftentimes did hee patiently beare with his people in the wilderness, although their heart were not pure and right with God. Thus haue *Ps. 78. 37.*  
 wee how *Mardocheus* and the rest of the Iewes did publicquely testifie their repentance, looking for helpe and deliuerance from God. If any man demand what their sinnes were, the answer is easie, that besides the vsuall sinnes whereunto men are giuen, this also was added, that through feare and negligence they remayned in those strange countryes, when the rest of their brethren, by the commandement and leaue of *Cyrus*, were returned to *Ierusalem* and the holy land. And it behoued them when they were thus appointed to the slaughter, to feele how great a sinne they had committed, in not returning with the rest into their country. By this example and such like in which we see  
 that  
 God



that the faithfull neuer found more safe  
 protection then Gods mercie; nor more  
 strong weapons then prayers and teares;  
 our sluggishnes must be rowled up, espe-  
 cially at this time, in which we see the  
 furie of the enemies more then euer to be  
 kindled, and that they take greater cou-  
 rage to oppresse Gods truth, and de-  
 stroy Gods pure seruice; to flee vnto  
 him, and to be conuerted with our whole  
 heart, that hauing mercie on vs, he will  
 appoint an ende of our miseries, or at  
 the least moderate them, and giue vs  
 strength, whereby through his name  
 wee may overcome all incommodities  
 and dangers whatsoever. And of  
 the remedie which *Mardocheus* and  
 the rest of the *Iewes* did seeke, this  
 farre.

The other remedie vnto which *Mar-  
 docheus* did flee, is the fauour of *Ester*, for  
 which cause it is sayd that he went euer  
 vnto the Kings gate, to wit, that he  
 might be seene by some of *Esters* retinue  
 and so declare vnto her in how great  
 danger both he and the whole nation of  
 the *Iewes* were: for hee might not enter  
 within the Kings gate, being clothed with  
 sackcloth.

*Sackcloth.* Where by the way we are to note, that the Kings of *Persia*, that nothing might either come to their eares, or be in their sight, whereby they might be made sadde, (as are cryes, and weeping, and fighting, and the very attyre of the afflicted testifying their sorrowe) would not that any should come into their sight in such apparell: and besides that this was vsed to be done by them, that they might driue farre away all memorie and thought of death. But this is not onely a great nicenesse and effeminacie, but it is also exceeding great and more then barbarous crueltie. For to what ende are Kings appointed, but that they should be the refuge of the miserable and afflicted? So it cometh for the most part to passe, that there is no entrance for the distressed into the house, nor any waye or meanes to complayne vnto them: but they must comfort themselves with this, that the gate of heauen is alwayes wide open vnto them, in as much as the Father of heauen calleth all that are afflicted vnto him, and promisseth them helpe and ayde. Therefore *Mardocheus*, seeing  
he



he could not enter into the kings house, cryeth out in the streetes, that *Ester* may be certified of this his sorrow, which also came to passe by her maidens & Eunuchs: whereat she was grieved exceedingly, and sent him other garments, that so he might enter into the kings palace, but *Mardocheus* refused them. By this wee may know, that *Esters* gentle disposition and nature, was not altered by her royall dignitie and greatnesse, but that she had a most louing carefulnes towards *Mardocheus*, whome she worthily acknowledged as her neere kinsman, and holdeth him in steede of her father: and besides would gladly relieue him, and if it were possible rid him of all care and doubtfulnesse. A most worthie example for all to behold, and namely for mighty men, who haue all delights in abundance, that they may learne to relieue the distressed: for for this end, haue they receiued at Gods hande, riches and abundance of all prosperitie, that they should communicate them vnto others, and succour the afflicted. That *Mardocheus* refuseth the garments offered, it partly proceeded of the greatnesse of his

upon the back of *Aster*. 225

his sorrow, which he could not dissem-  
ble: partly that he would not seeme to be  
carefull of his private commoditie; but re-  
maining in mourning, would more and  
more make apparant the greatnesse of his  
sorrow, both to *Ester* and to all his bre-  
thren. By which example we are adma-  
nished: that in publique calamities we  
must not haue regard of our private secu-  
rity, but of the defence of the whole com-  
mon-wealth, and by our example to  
moue others to seek those remedies,  
whereby the safetie of all may be provided  
for: and that we may moue others, there  
ought to appeare in vs euident signes,  
that wee are touched with the sence of  
Gods wrath, and feeling of the common  
calamitie.

Now *Ester* is not offended with his  
refusing of the garments: as Princes are  
commonly wont to be angry, if all shing  
is not done as please them: but shee send-  
eth *Hatach* one of her Eunuches, to en-  
quire diligently the cause of this moun-  
ting: that when it was knowen, shee  
might remedie it. For shee knew that  
*Madame* was not wont to be so moued  
at matters of nothing. By her careful-  
nesse,



nelle and sollicitude, we learne not to neglect the teares and mourning of the afflicted, as though they touched vs not. For it is the property of an arrogant and disdainfull person, not to be moued with the teares and groines of those that mourne. When as this is one of the greatest griefes in miserie, to be contemned by those that are at ease: besides that, if we diligently looke into the causes of sorrow, we shall find, that our state is in handling, and that we haue need take heed, when our neighbors house is on fire, which thing we heere see that *Ester* had experience of.

*Mardocheus* being demanded, doth particularly unfold what hapned vnto him, the conspiracie of *Haman* against all the Jewes, and the kings commandement, to destroy them: and withall, sendeth a copie thereof vnto *Ester*, shewing besides, what had befallen: he confesseth that he had kindled *Haman*'s wrath against him, because he wold not bow vnto him as others did, though he were often solicited thereto: and so sheweth that he neither was ashamed nor did repent, nor to haue yielded to a mortall man, & him accursed of God, that honor which was due to God.

lone. Therefore, when as doing well, & resisting the pride & impietie of the wicked, we suffer calamitie & affliction, let vs not be ashamed: & if by occasion our fact, shal draw others into any great danger and calamitie, let vs not therefore thinke that we are to be blamed: as we ought not to blame *David*, for hatred of whom, *Saul* did slay foure score Priests at *Nob*, and after ward wasted their whole Citie with sword and fire: neither also those wise men which came out of the the East to worship our Lord and Sauour Christ Iesus, who being warned in a dreame by an Angell, kept not promise with *Herode*, but departed secretly from him; and so were the cause of the slaughter of those infants, in the region of *Bethlehem*, are therefore to be condemned.

I. Sam. 21.

Math. 2.

That which he telleth of the mony offered by *Haman*, that he might obtaine of the king, authoritie to kill the Iewes, it serueth to shew that he was the author of the conspiracie, and so to thirst for the Iewes blood, that hee thought to buy it though with so great a price. So that *Haman* of our time, did liberally bestow, and would haue bestowed ouer that which hee held

Q. 2

most



most pretious, as did also the Romane  
 Cleargie, in hope to roote out the Church  
 and to abolish the Gospell, vnder the  
 name and pretence of heresie, whercof  
 they falsly accuse it. He deliuereth also  
 the copie of the Edict, that all doubt  
 might be remoued from *Ester*, and that he  
 might euen set before her eyes, how cer-  
 taine and present a danger did hang ouer  
 all the Iewes. So it behoueth vs, before  
 we be moued, and spread any report of  
 feare and trouble, that we haue certainly  
 tried the truth of those things wherof we  
 speak, & not to trouble any with vaine and  
 vncertaine coniectures. I confesse that we  
 haue cause to feare all euils at the hand of  
 our enemies, but yet not without wise-  
 dome, that we be not moued, but so farre  
 forth, as God reuealeth their malice vnto  
 vs. The whole drift of all this relation, is  
 declared about the end of the 8. verse: for  
*Mardocheus* willett *Ester*, as one whom he  
 had brought vp, that she should go to the King  
 to entreat him, and to entreat in his presence  
 for her people. In a matter then of so great  
 moment, he speaketh with authoritie, least  
*Ester* shuld pretend any euasion or excuse  
 not to go in vnto the King, & to become

sure vnto him for her people. So that *Mardocheus* here teacheth them who are in fauour with Princes, not to fauour themselves, if they feare God, but to make supplication vnto them for the Church, when it shall be in calamitie and oppressed by iniurie. Yea and those Kings and Princes who are neighbours vnto those that oppresse the Church, ought to be intercessors vnto them, both by intreatie and admonitions to release the Church: nay further, if necessitie so require, to ayde it with men, munition, and money, which in these last persecutions of Antichrist, many with praise haue performed. By this example we are also admonished, that we must not reject those lawfull means which God doth offer for the preservation of his Church. Now what can be more conuenient then that the wife should intreate the husband for innocents? What more iust then to desire the stay of the vniust sheading of mans bloud? for in what thing may wee better employ that fauour and authoritie which we haue? Wherefore, woe vnto them, who for feare of their delights & profits, which endure but for a while, dare not once open their mouths, for the defence of the poore



Ps. 35. 13.

Ps. 12. 5.

members of the Sonne of God, whom they see daily to bee murdered: woe vnto our sloth and carelesnelle, vnlesse when as we see and heare the Lords inheritance to be wasted far and neare, with fire and sword with these robbers, we do not at least ioin our prayers with those who haue not ceased continually these many years to powre out their prayers vnto God, for the deliuerance of his Church. David sheweth with how earnest affection he wept and fasted for his enemies, when they were afflicted, what then may we think, that we ought to do, when we see the poore church of God so many wayes on euery side to be oppressed? Assuredly our prayers & supplications shall not bee in vaine with that Father of mercie: we haue many testimonies by vndoubted experience: Let vs not then be wearied in praying, looking whē that iust Iudge will come to reuenge the cause of his, & to set them at libertie. For God will arise because of the sighing of the poore, & will come in a most convenient time to deliuer and saue them, that in the middest of the church there may be sufficient matter of praise and thanksgiuing, through Iesus Christ; to whom alone be glory for ever.

*Amen.*

THE

# THE TWELFTH

## Sermon.

*The feare and excuse of Ester, the faith and constancie of Mardocheus, and the holy deliberation and purpose of Ester, after three dayes fast from v. 9. to the end.*

9. So Hatach returning, told Ester the words of Mordecai.

10. Then Ester said vnto Hatach, and commanded him to say vnto Mordecai.

11. All the Kings seruants, and the people of the Kings Prouinces do know, that whosoever, man or woman, that commeth to the King into the inner court which is not called, there is a law of his, that he shall die, except him to whom the king holdeth out the golden rod, that he may liue. Now I haue not bene called to come vnto the king these thirtie dayes.

12. And they certified Mordecai of Esters words.

13. And Mordecai said, that they should aunswere Ester thus. Thinke not with thy selfe, that thou shalt escape in the



*Kings house, more then all the Iewes.*

14. For if thou heldest thy peace at this time, comfort and deliuerance shall appeare vnto the Iewes out of an other place, but thou and thy fathers house shall perish: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdome for such a time?

15. Then Ester commanded to answer Mordecai.

16. Go and assemble all the Iewes that are found in Susa, and fast yee for me: and eat not, nor drinke in three dayes. I also and my maydes will fast likewise, and so will I go in to the King, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17. So Mordecai went his way, and did according vnto all that Ester had commaunded him.

**A**ffliction is the tryal of our faith, and the furnace in which there is made manifest both the weakenes and infirmitie of our flesh; as also the strength of the spirit, which remaineth in the hearts of the faithfull: it is also the whetstone whereby wee are sharpened in earnest and vehement prayer vnto GOD: and

and which maketh vs wise, to seeke the  
ayd and help of men in a lawfull manner.  
All which things are most euident in this  
historic. For in that extreme affliction  
which hanged ouer the heads of the *Jewes*,  
*Ester* strooken with feare, refuseth to go  
in vnto the king to intreate for the. Con-  
trariwise, *Mardocheus* with an inuincible  
faith and constancie, exhorteth her to do  
her durie, which she afterward purposeth  
to do, fleeing to most feruent and extra-  
ordinarie prayer ioyned with three dayes  
fast, after which, she is fully determined  
to speake vnto the King for the safetie  
of the Church. So that there are three  
chiefe points heere to be discusse, the  
first the excuse of *Ester* for feare of cer-  
taine danger, *ver.* 11. the second the faith  
and courage of *Mardocheus* in exhorting  
*Ester* to the deliuerance of the Church,  
*ver.* 12, 13, 14. the third the holie pur-  
pose and pietie of this holy woman, being  
readie against all euents and danger for  
the succour of her people, *ver.* 15. & 16.  
These examples are proposed vnto vs,  
that we may know what we should do in  
aduersitie, what meanes we may vse to be  
deliuered from them, with what zeale,



what faith, what constancie and courage the Church is to be defended and our brethren delivered.

Touching the first point, *Ester* being certified by *Hatach* of the decree made against the *Jewes*, and of the helpe that *Mardocheus* did desire in this necessitie, doth excuse her selfe by the great rigour of the lawe made against those who came vnto the King not being called, and doth adde, that that was the thirtieth day since she had been called to come in vnto the King. This seemeth a faire excuse: for there is lykely to fall on her a most euident danger, seeing the lawe is manifest, and so much the more severely obserued, by how much it was more commodious for preservation of the Kings Maiestie. It increased her feare, because in thirtie dayes shee was not called in vnto the King, and therefore seemeth to be out of fauour: and she distrusteth that she should obtaine her suite offending against the lawe; and so it was to be feared least shee should cast her selfe headlong into certayne perill of death, and do no good neither to her selfe nor her people. And so

*Ester*

*Ester* desireth *Mardocheus* to consider of it, and holde her excused. But the feare of private danger ought not to affright her, but that neuerthelesse shee should, with Gods fauour, trie the Kings minde, and seeke to turne it to hinder that horrible slaughter. Heereby we see, that those who are come to great dignities, and possesse much which they may lose, are also more fearefull then others: though for the most part, men rather care for their owne hinderance, then the common danger. And you shall scarcely finde any who will not seeke some excuse, when he should helpe the Church: and hath not more regard of redressing his owne discommodities, then of relieuing the brethren. Moreover, it is no great maruayle to see a woman affrayde of imminent danger, when it often tymes happeneth, that men, euen of a good courage, bee so daunted with dangers, that they leaue their duties vndone. This is apparant in the Apostles, and namely in *Peter*, when they sawe theyr Lorde (whose myracles were yet fresh in memorie, and euen as it were before their eyes)



to be in the hands of his enemies: therefore the weake and fearefull men are not to be reiected, but rather to be stirred vp and encouraged.

Hence also it is to be noted, how inconvenient the condition is of vnequall mariage, when one part is greater and more worthie then the other: and how the most mightie do most easily breake the lawes of holy matrimonic, which are these; *That the man hath not power ouer his bodie, but the woman: nor the woman power of her bodie but the man: and that they ought not to be separated, but for a time, with the consent of both parties.* Wee may obserue besides, how kings vnder pretence of their securitie, and defense of their princely maiestie, do very often make tyrannicall and vniust lawes, and quite contrarie and repugnāt to the end for which they are appointed by God. For what I pray is more contrarie to the office of a good king, then vnder paine of death to forbid any man to enter into his court? What more inhumane then to shut the doore against those to whom Iustice is due? How great a barbarousnes is it, that the wife dares not come into the presence

of her husband, but that she shall stand in danger of death: Thus it cometh to passe, that Princes whiles they go about to maintaine their dignitie, do degenerate into beasts, so that none dares safely come neere vnto them: and their throne which ought to be the refuge and sanctuarie of the poore and distressed, is become a place offeare and terror. So did not the good Kings and Emperours in old time, but themselves would iudge the causes of euery priuate man, and heare euery one: as we see that *Salomon* did patiently heare the controuersie of those two harlots, and with exceeding wisdom did decide it. So the good Emperours of *Rome*, did themselves openly iudge the controuersies of their subiects. Now what a miserie, and what a mischief is this, the kings house and cares are at all seasons open to *Hamans* false accusations and slanders, but it is not lawfull for the Queene to make intercession to the king for the iust defense of her selfe and her people: I confesse that there ought to be great regard to be had of the safetie and dignitie of Princes, but they are not to be deprived of clemencie and iustice, then

*I. King. 3.  
16.*



then which they haue not either surer  
pillers or safer defence for their State.  
And thus farte of *Esters* excuse.

Yet *Mardocheus* accepteth not of this  
excuse, but couragiously exhorteth, yea  
in a manner compelleth her to do her  
duetie, *Thinke not*, sayth he, *in thy minde*  
*that thou shalt be deliuered in the Kings*  
*house, onely and alone of all the Iewes.* For  
*if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time,*  
*a breathing and deliuerance shall come to*  
*the Iewes by some other meanes: but thou*  
*and thy fathers house shall perishe: and who*  
*knoweth whether thou art come to this king-*  
*dome for such a time.* In fewe words hee  
proppoundeth vnto her three chief points  
of great moment, First, that she is great-  
ly deceined, if she thinke that she alone  
should be deliuered from the common  
danger. Next, that if she held her peace,  
yet God would otherwise provide for  
his people, and shee should perish.  
The third point is Gods providence,  
whereby not without some great cause  
shee was lifted vp into the dignitie  
royall, to wit, that in this urgent neces-  
sitie shee should helpe the Church of  
God. Hee may seeme to haue spoken  
these

these things as a Prophet of God: for otherwise, some will say, how could hee so confidently say, that succour and deliuerance should come vnto the *Jewes*, and *Ester* if shee held her peace should perish? Yet because hee followeth not the vsuall manner of speech of the Prophets, *Thus sayeth the Lord*, therefore in this historie, the words of *Mardocheus* are not to be taken as a Prophecie, but as an application of the generall doctrine of the lawe and of the Prophets, to this speciall fact. And these things will better be vnderstoode by the explication of euery part. *ob. thus becom*  
 The drift of *Mardocheus*, is to put out of *Esters* minde the feare of the danger which privately might light on her, if not beeing called shee had gone in vnto the King to make supplication for the *Jewes*: that hee might effect this, hee obiecteth a greater feare vnto her: and that in two sorts: first that, shee shall not escape free from this slaughter, if by force of this decree all the *Jewes* bee put to death: then, shee also hath cause to feare, least if at this tyme shee deny her helpe vnto.



vnto the Church, it should be deliuered  
 by some other meanes, and God would  
 punish her sloth and cowardise. The first  
 point was very likely, if you consider  
*Hamans* malice, and his fauour and au-  
 thoritie with the King, which was so  
 great, that the King easily beleued him  
 in all things. And truly when all the rest  
 of the Iewes were destroyed, as the furie  
 and rage of cut-throates increaseth by  
 sheading of mans bloud, it would be an  
 easie matter to perswade this prophane  
 king, to take away her life also; who onely  
 being left alive of that whole nation,  
 would euen do nought but breath out  
 reuenge for the iniurie receiued. The  
 other point dependeth vpon the promi-  
 ses of God, to preserue and defend his  
 Church, to heare the cry of the afflicted,  
 to arise for their help, to haue his eares  
 open vnto their prayers, and his hands  
 stretched out to saue them; and others of  
 this sort many, whereof the whole Scrip-  
 ture is full: and on the contrarie part, vpon  
 the threatnings against those who do  
 not help and ayde those who are in mis-  
 rie and affliction: and this by force of  
 Gen. 12. 3. the couenant made with *Abraham*, I will  
 blesse

blesse them that blesse thee, and curse them  
that curse thee. As also Debra doth curse *Jud. 5. 23.*  
the inhabitants of Meroz, who came not, as  
their dutie required, to helpe the people of  
the Lord. *Mardocheus* therefore fitly doth  
apply to the present purpose, the pro-  
mises and threatnings made by God in his  
law, and so teacheth vs in our greatest dan-  
gers, both publique and priuate, to apply  
those precious testimonies of Gods fauor:  
as for example that laying of the Prophet,  
He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of *Zach. 2. 8.*  
mine eye. Also, I will be a wall of fire about & *vers. 5.*  
you. And againe, to the stirring vp of our  
owne and other mens sloth and cowar-  
dise, the threatnings are to be considered,  
wherein God threatneth punishment, not  
onely to those who oppresse the Church,  
or laugh at her calamitie, but also to all  
those who do not helpe her (if they may)  
both by word and deed: for this which  
*Mardocheus* setteth down, is to be noted,  
if thou hold thy peace at this time, thou and  
thy fathers house shall perish. So that in the  
dangerous times of the Church, to take  
care for thy selfe alone, and for thine own  
curitie, and not to dare to speake any  
thing in the defence of the Church; and



to seperate thy state and cause from the people of God ; is to procure ruine and destruction to thy selfe. For if safetie be any where it is in Gods house. Whereunto appertaine those things which are spoken, *Pro*, 24, 11, 12. How great then is the madnesse of those, who go out of the Church and abiure the truth ; that they may provide for themselves & their state: and how great is their furie, who hunt for commoditie onely by the losse and ruine of the Church? Further out of this place we may learne, that as the weak and fearfull are not altogether to be reiected, so also they are not to be nourished in their infirmitie, but to be pricked euē to the quick by the proposing of Gods threatnings and iudgements vnto them : and when the question is of the safetie of the Church, all feare of dangers and threatnings which may proceed from me, are to be despised. The King *Assuerus* forbiddeth that any shuld come vnto him vnlesse he were called. great danger hangeth ouer his head that doth the contrary, but God biddeth euery one according to their power & ability to help his Church : Woe then vnto vs, if we shal be slacke or slothful, and vn-

lesse

lesse we rather obey God then man, which thing the Apostles themselves in theyr greatest daungers, by their example haue taught vs.

The third reason is of greatest weight, from Gods prouidence; whereby Ester was exalted into so great dignitie for so necessarie a time, *whom knoweth* saith hee, *whether for such a time thou art come to the Kingdome?* as though he should say: God who ruleth and governeth all things by his prouidence, euen the very moments of times, hath not without cause exalted thee to so great a dignitie, by so wonderfull a meane, but that weighing with thy selfe so great a fauour of God bestowed on thee, thou shouldest serue his purpose for the profit and deliuerance of his people. For what vnthankfulness shal it be, not to acknowledge so great a liberalitie of Gods toward thee, not to consecrate thy dignitie to his glory, and thy fauour and authoritie to the safetie of his Church? So it becometh euery one wisely to consider vnto what God doth call him by his prouidence, & by his benefits, in euery estate and vocation, wherein God by his grace hath placed vs.



Isa. 49. 23.

Kings and Queenes must remember that they are called and appointed by God to be nursing fathers and nurces of his Church: Ministers must remember that they give themselves to prayer and the administration of the word: finally, by how much euery one hath receiued greater gifts at the hand of God, and abilitie to helpe the Church, by so much the more carefully ought he to employ himself vnto it. Here also we may perceiue, that whereas *Mardochaus* at the beginning commanded *Ester* not to declare her nation and her people, it was not done to teach her to dissemble her religion, and not to care for her brethren: but to helpe the Church more conueniently when necessitie should require. So then must we vse discretion, that we may shew forth our faith when time shall require by all good effects, and what our zeale is towards the house of God. Lo then with what reasons God would haue *Ester* to bee instructed by him who had brought her vp, that she might be an instrument of his grace and mercie.

Let vs now then proceed to see her holily purpose, being compolled by the force and weight of so necessary reasons: Shee comman-

commandeth to call all the Jewes which dwell at Susa together, to a fast of three dayes and three nights, and promiseth, that she also and her maides will fast likewise, to crie unto God for helpe and aide, to whose will committing her selfe and her life, shee determineth with a settled mind to go to the King, and make supplication for the safetie of her people. The assembling of the faithfull hath bene at all times very necessarie, when any necessitie hath bene offered to pray more earnestly unto God, and to make profession of publique repentance, which is most euident in the first and second Chapters of the Prophet *Joel*: and by the examples of the Kings of *Juda* in their greatest dangers and distresse, as we see that *Hezekiah* did when he was besieged by *Sennacherib*; and *Je-* 2. *Kni.* 19.  
*hosaphat*, when the *Ammonites* and *Idu-* 2. *Ch.* 20. 3.  
*means* did set against him. I confesse that the miserable captiues had no Temple at *Susa* where they might assemble themselves, but they had Gods promises, who is present with all that call vpon him: and perhaps they had before obtained some place for the exercise of their religion. So exact and rigorous a fast of three



dayes and three nights without meate or  
 drinke, in colder regions should exceed  
 measure, because men in those countries  
 could not endure it: but yet in those hot  
 countries it was not altogether intollera-  
 ble, though indeed it were very strict & ri-  
 gorous. This fast also is not commaunded  
 as a worship acceptable to God of it selfe,  
 but as an incitement to more vehemēt and  
 fervent prayer, to greater humilitie, and  
 lively repentance. Fasting therefore of  
 it selfe is not acceptable, but because of  
 the sacrifice of a contrite and humble  
 heart, because of prayers proceeding from  
 faith, because of the confession of finnes,  
 and expectation of helpe from Gods mer-  
 cie, as before hath bene said. *Ester* wil haue  
 them fast for her, not as though she alone  
 were in danger, but because shee was to  
 make intercession for al, and by her good  
 or euill successe, others were to bee dealt  
 with: so that in her life or death, the life or  
 death of others did consist. The Church  
 therefore doth not without cause pray so  
 earnestly for her, that shee might find fa-  
 uour with *Assuerus*, and obtaine that  
 which she did demand for the safetie of  
 the people.

The pietie and godlinesse of this holy  
 Queene; sheweth it selfe in this, that she  
 desireth not more of others, then she wold  
 fulfill herselfe, giuing her selfe to fasting  
 and prayer with her maides. three dayes  
 and three nights. By which also we learne  
 what care Ester had vsed in instructing  
 her maides in true religion and the know-  
 ledge of God; and our negligence is so  
 much the more blame-worthy, vnlesse we  
 follow the example of this noble Lady,  
 as well in prayer, as in the right education  
 of her familie. But what a shame is it I be-  
 seech you, in these dangerous times when  
 we are fallen, that the zeale of many is  
 so cold, in fasting, in praying, in calling  
 vpon G O D with humble petitions,  
 and in stirring vp of one another to the  
 true exercises of religion. Can any  
 man marueile then, that wee are ouer-  
 whelmed with so many euilles, and that  
 our calamities encrease daily more and  
 more?

That she saith she will go to the king a-  
 gainst the law, she speaketh it not in con-  
 tempt of the lawe, but that shee might  
 shew, that shee more esteemed of Gods  
 commandement, then of the Kings law.



and of the peoples safetic, then of her own danger, therefore shee committeth her life into Gods hand, in these words: *If I perish, I perish.* Think not that these words are rashly and vnadvisedly cast out by her, as though she did wilfully and by despaire cast her selfe into danger: for they are holy words, proceeding from her who offered vp her selfe and her life for a sacrifice with obedience of faith, whatsoever did betide, being ready, and reposing the euent on the good pleasure of God, esteeming her selfe happie, if it happened that she should die in so iust a cause. So did that good Patriarch *Iacob* speake, when he sent his sonne *Beniamin* into *Egypt*, with his other brethren: *If I be robbed of my child, let me be robbed.*

Ge. 49.14.

Hence it appeareth, that faith, which is guided by the holy Ghost, is not rash, and yet when necessitie shall so require, and dutie binde, it refuseth not any dangers bee they neuer so greate, with a trust and hope to glorifie GOD in his bodie, both in life and death: because the faithfull are perswaded that *Christ* is with them both in life and death, aduantage.

Phi. 1.20.21

Hereby

Hereby

Heereby also we may learne, how profitable the mutuall admonitions and the holy exhortations of the faithfull among themselues are: for loe *Ester*, who before was fearefull, by *Mardocheaus* exhortation is made more bold, and that with an holy boldnesse, shewing in deede that to be true which was sayd before, *that shee was subiect vnto him, as whē shee was brought up with him.* For if shee had sought for starting holes and excuses, as noble personages are wont when they are overmuch pressed, she might take exceptions, that desperate men did little care when they were past hope themselues, to draw others with them into the like danger. She might also say, that she was not the cause of this mischiese, but *Mardocheaus*, who would not yeeld vnto *Haman*, or at least keepe himselfe secret, rather then come into his presence. But a quiet and settled minde seeketh not such hiding corners full of arrogancie and contempt, but attendeth what his duetie requireth, and trembleth at Gods word. Last of all, we are to see how *Mardocheaus* and the Church at *Susa* do also their dueties, not casting all the burden as many do, of the

Chap. 2. 20.



whole businesse, on *Ester*, but praying with fasting and earnest supplication vnto God, that he will fauour and prosper her enterprise. So faithfull people ought to pray vnto God for their Kings and rulers, and for all that trauayle or be in danger for the defense or safetie of the Church, that they faint not vnder their burden. The people made prayer for the King going forth to warre, *Psalm. 20.* The Church at *Ierusalem* made earnest prayer vnto God for *Peter* as long as he was kept in prison. And this is the true meanes to preserve the Church, to wit, that on the one side the *Gouernours* do their dueties, and be the first by Gods guiding who vndertake any danger: on the other side, the people haue a speciall care of them who spare no labour nor paynes for them, and all together looke for safetie and deliuerance at his hande, who neuer fayleth them that call ypon him through *Christ Iesus*, to whome be glorie for euermore.

*Amen.*

THE

## THE THIRTEENTH Sermon.

How after the fast and prayer God prospereth the entrance of Ester vnto King Assuerus, and giueth her fauour with him: from the first verse of the fift Chapter, vnto the ninth.

### CHAP. V.

1. And when the third day was accomplished, Ester put on her royall apparell, and stode in the court of the Kings palace within, ouer against the Kings house: and the King sate vpon his royall throne, in the Kings palace, ouer against the gate of the house,
2. And when the King sawe Ester the Queene standing in the court, she found fauour in his sight; and the King held out the golden scepter that was in his hand: so Ester drew neere and touched the top of the scepter.

3. Then



3. Then sayd the King vnto her, what wilt thou **Queene Ester**? and what is thy request? it shall be giuen thee to the halfe of the kingdome.
4. Then sayd Ester, if it please the King, let the King and Haman come this day vnto the banquet that I haue prepared for him.
5. And the King sayd, cause Haman to make haste that he may do as Ester hath sayd. So the King and Haman came to the banquet that Ester had prepared.
6. And the King sayd vnto Ester at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition that it may be giuen thee? and what is thy request? it shall euen be performed vnto the halfe of the kingdome.
7. Then answered Ester and sayd, My petition and request is,
8. If I haue found fauour in the sight of the King, and if it please the King to giue me my petition, and to performe my request, let the King and Haman come to the banquet, that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrowe according to the Kings saying.

The

**T**He promises of the Lord made vnto the faithfull, that he will be reconciled vnto them, as oft as they turne vnto him: and that he will heare them and deliuer them out of dangers, when they poure out their prayers before him, are so many and so expresse set downe, that no man who hath but once heard of them can doubt, but that he shall finde God, as oft as he shall seeke him, and shall by experience feele him to be a light in darkenesse, a comfort in aduersitie, a stay in affliction, and a sauiour and deliuerer in all euils. For what is more plaine then that which is spoken in the 145. Psalme, vers. 18, 19? *The Lord is neere vnto all that call vpon him: yea to all them that call vpon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that feare him: he also will heare their cry and will saue them.* And what more euident then that same of Amos the Prophet, chap. 5. verse. 4? *Seeke the Lord and ye shall live: and that of Ioel, chap. 2. vers. 32. Whosoener shall call vpon the name of the Lord shall be saued.* Howbeit, then are we made much more certaine, when we see the effects  
of



of such promises in the notable examples of those which call vpon God. As, when David doth in so many places testifie that he was heard of the Lord when he cryed vnto him; that hee was set free out of distresse, deliuered from all enemies, and confirmed against all dangers: that God was vnto him a *light*, a *refuge*, *defence*, *castle*, *weapon*, and *saluation*; and therefore by his example hee inuitteth and exhorteth all men to *taste* the *goodnesse* of God, to trust in him, and at all seasons and in all things wholie to leane vnto him. And vnto this appertayneth this example, which euen vnto the end of this historie wee shall intreate of, in which we see how *Ester*, *Ardabachers*, and the whole people of the Iewes, after they had called vpon God in their extreme danger, did feelee his blessing: and in all their businesse, being happily led vnder his conduct, sawe at the last, both an admirable deliuerance of themselves, and an horrible confusion and vengeance on their enemies; that thereby we might more and more finde by prooffe, that God will be found to saluation, of all those who

*Psal.* 18. 1.

*Psal.* 34. 8.

in their griefes and euils seeke him, and call vpon him in trueth. For the present we are to see, how God after fasting and prayer did blesse the entrance of Ester to the King *Assuerus*, and gaue her such fauour, that he was willing to come twise vnto her, vnto the banquet which she prepared. Wherein there are three chiefe points to be vnfolded: to wit, 1. the entrance of the Queene into the Kings court: 2. her entertainement, and choise giuen vnto her by the King, to demaund whatsoever she would: 3. the wisdom of Ester, before she would declare the chiefe part of her request. An historie worthie to be thoroughly discussed in euery particular of it, that out of euery part we may drawe some instruction.

And when the third day was accomplished, Ester put on her royall apparell, and stood in the inner court of the Kings palace, ouer against the Kings house: and the King sat on the throne of his kingdome in the Kings house. It is not expressed whether she entred alone, or with some companye, but if wee haue regard to the prohibition, that none should enter into the court without commandement,



it seemeth that her trayne stayed at the gate of this court, into which she alone entred: for so great was her charitie, that she would not drawe any with her into danger, being content with these companions onely, Faith, Charitie, and Repentance. She adorned herselfe with royall apparell, not for pride or vaine shew, when she was as yet in danger of her life, but for ornament and seemliness, lest peradventure she should haue been lesse acceptable to the King her husband, if she should haue presented her selfe vnto him in mourning apparell. Her bodie then was decked with magnificent ornaments: but in her heart she re-  
tayned deepe sorrowe. Neither is that to be accounted dissimulation, but wisdom, to obserue that which was seemely in the presence of the King. For it appeareth that she rather sought to please God then men, when by her three dayes fast she had made herselfe pale and wan: but it was enough that God did fauour her, who grantech beautie and grace according to his will. Wherefore they who are delighted with the noueltie and vanitie of sumptuous and most luxurious apparell,

apparell, that they may turne al mens eyes to gaze on them, and their tongues to talk of them, glorying in their riches and bewtie, are nothing holpen by this example, neither doth it auail any whit to excuse their pride and vain glorie. Neither do we condemne that euery one be apparelled according to their degree and dignitie, so that they seeke not new fashions of apparell and those immodest and vnchaste: and that the heart bee adorned within with true humilitie and the feare of god, with charitie, submission to learne, and modestie.

Ester then entereth with her royal robes into the inner Court, but she dares not enter into that part of the house in which the king sate, but stayed in the inner court ouer against the Kings house, vntill such time as she might be espied by the King, which was not done without feare of that danger which she had cast her selfe in. A most couragious emerprise of Ester proceeding from faith and charitie, by whose guidance shee ouercame all feares for she might alwaies think with her selfe, that shee offended against Asseverus lawe, and that therefore she might bee in like



case with *Vashti*, for comming when shee was not called, as *Vashti* was for not comming when shee was called. This also augmented her feare and distrust, that for a moneths space shee had not beene called vnto the king. But on the one side, her confidence in the promises of God, that he would be with them that feare him and walke in his wayes, and on the other, her charitie and desire that she hath to helpe the Church, do cause her that shee preferreth the doing of her dutie before all dangers.

Hence wee are admonished straight after our prayers to set hand to worke, and constantly to prosecute our enterprise, as we see this holy woman to haue done, who after her fast, early in the morning without any delay, doubteth not to go in vnto the King *Assuerus*. And besides, we are taught, that our faith, if it be liuely and working through charitie, shall neuer bee remooued from performing her duties, whatsoever danger seeme to threaten vs destruction: for faith will affoord vs Gods present helpe in the midst of dangers, all which through charitie and desire to helpe others we shall

easily

easily overcome. And this is *Esters* fact.

You shall now see the happie successe which it had from the Lord. As soone as the king saw her, she found fauor in his sight: and he held out towards her the golden Scepter, and kindly calleth her by her name, adding also the titles which belonged to the dignitie royal. *Ester* also draweth neare, and toucheth the top of the Scepter, in signe of reuerence and subiection: which modestie most becometh al married women. So God holdeth the heart of the King in his hand, and he turneth it in a moment whither so euer it pleaseth him: as is said, *Pro. 21.v. I.* Hee also bewtifieth the countenance of *Ester*, with sweetnesse and amiable fauor, that she may be the more acceptable. The golden Scepter which is holden forth vnto her, is a token of pardon against the transgression of the law: in that the king calling her by the name of Queen, asketh what she would haue, it is a signe of fauour and good will: and in that he also inuiteth her to aske, with so liberall an offer, euen vnto the halfe of the kingdome, it putteth her in hope of obtaining her supplication of the king.



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For the King might easily gather, both by this extraordinarie fact, and by the countenance and gesture of *Ester*, that she had some great thing in her minde. Yet the King was too liberall in promising, and might rashly haue ensnared himselfe, if *Ester* had bene as readie in demanding, as he was in promising. But Kings can hardly moderate themselves, whether they promise or threaten: and surely it would better a great deale besecme kings, (who ought to do nothing without iustice) first with good counsell and mature deliberation to vnderstand what is demanded, before they binde themselves by any rash promise. We see that it turned vnto

*Marc. 6.23* euill to *Herode*, that he bound himself in a rash promise: for thereby he defiled both himselfe and his table with the innocent blood of *Iohn the Baptist*. Neuerthelesse God would haue the minde of *Ester* to bee filled with good hope and ioy, and assurance by this immoderate offer of the King.

Now if *Ester* had iustly occasion of reioycing, for that she found the Kings fauour and good will towards her to bee so great: what may we do, who haue so excellent

cellent and large promises from God, as well of this present, as of the life to come? For God who *neither can lye nor be changed*, doth promise vnto vs eternall life, and not a part onely or parcell of his Kingdome, but a full fruition of himselfe, and all his good things, as it is written, that *God shall be all in all*: and that *we also shall be partakers of the diuine nature*. Here we see how effectual prayers be, by which the entrie is made open vnto Ester into the Kings house, and the way made easie, and the Kings heart mollified and made soft: which haue in greatest distresses procured an issue, in danger obtained securitie, and in the very momēt of death, haue wrought life and deliuerance. If therefore we desire to wade out of our euilles and distresses, to haue an happie end of our affayres, to find fauour with the fiercest men; behold here the onely meanes and easiest waye; that casting our selues downe before God with ardent praier, we desire his helpe, and place our whole confidence in him. For as the Prophet singeth sweetely, *Psal. 34. vers. 5. They that looke to him shall be lightned; and their face shall not be ashamed*: as also in an other place he prai-

*Tit. I. 2.*

*Iam. I. 17*

*1. Cor. 15. 28*

*2. Pet. 1. 4*



**Ps. 59. 17** I seth Gods goodnesse when he saith: *Vnto thee o my strength will I sing, for God is my defence, and my mercifull God.* Thus you see how happie *Esters* entrance was.

Let vs heare how wisely she vseth this prosperous gale of the kings fauour: to wit: *She biddeth the King and Haman to a banquet.* In which thing her modestie, wisdom, and integritie do shine: for she doth not abuse the kings fauor: she breaks not forth by and by into teares, and howling and sobs, as perhaps there seemed fit occasion offred vnto her by the kings fauour and *Hamans* absence. Her modestie is exceeding great, in that she restraineth her affections, and patiently expecteth a fitter opportunitie to complain vnto the king, and make her supplication. By this we learne, that we must bridle our affections and passions, least we be carried headlong by them, and that it is a commendable moderation not to bee rashly mooued, although there bee iust cause of complaint: for oftentimes iust griefe doth driue vs beyond the bounds of moderation, that hardly men or women can temper themselves, when they

they finde patient dares lent to their complaints: wherby it commeth to passe, that oftentimes the bitternesse of our most iust complaints, doth take much away from their waight and force.

Her wisdom appeareth, in that shee inviteth the King to a banquet, because shee knewe, that thereby shee should further procure his good will, for that shee had experience that hee was delighted with feastes: as in the first Chapter wee haue scene that hee spent halfe a yeare in banqueting and drinkings. So the faithfull know how to vse things indifferent without euill, to serue their commoditie. Yea euen our Lord and Sauour Christ Iesus, did take occasion at those banquets whereunto he was bidden, to teach the chiefe poynts of our saluation. So he conuerted *Zaccharie* at a banquet: and in the house of *Simon* the Pharisee, he receiued that miserable sinner into fauor, teaching the Pharisee the doctrine of faith & repentance; and by the occasion of being entertained by *Matthew*, whome of a Ppublican hee made an Apostle, hee shewed the ende of his comming into the world,

*Lu. 19. 8. 9.*

*Lu. 7. 36.*

*&c.*

*Mat. 9. 10.*



cleared himselfe and his disciples from  
 slander, and set open the doore of conso-  
 lation to repentant sinners. *Es*ter there-  
 fore is not to be blamed, if she sought the  
 opportunitie of a banquet, more fitly to  
 make her supplication to the King. But  
 it seemeth that her dissimulation cannot  
 be excused, in that she biddeth *Haman* the  
 enemy of the Church, together with the  
 King; but in that so much the more ap-  
 peareth her integritie & vprightnesse: for  
 she prepareth her complaint to be vitte-  
 red in his presence, that she might before-  
 hand take away all matter of exception  
 and excuse, laying open the fraude wher-  
 by he did obtaine of the King so many an  
 Edict. And so *Es*ter by these things which  
 might seeme to turne to her blame, as  
 though she were guiltie of dissimulation  
 and treacherie, doth receive the praise of  
 great integritie and iustice. For the wic-  
 ked have no cause to complaine, whe-  
 ther their wickednesse be detected pri-  
 vately or publique; whether at a table, or  
 in the place of iudgement; so that there be  
 no place for fraude or deceit: but that she  
 saith bee simply and truly propounded:

neither

neither in a good cause is it a fault to vse things indifferent vnto profit and advantage. For right and equitie do not deprive vs of the vse of those things which without blame we may employ in the defense of a good cause. To be silent in prosecuting our right, is not to betray; to deferre til occasion be offered, is not to do iniurie to the aduerse partie; it is not crueltie or hypocrisie to bid him to a banquet, whome you meane to accuse; to entertaine an enimie at a feast, is not to lye. But some will say, it is at least to dissemble: I confesse it. But all dissimulation is not euill and to be condemned. Christ Iesus a great while suffered *Judas* at his table and committed vnto him his purse, as to a good and faithfull disciple, and yet he knew him to be a diuell and a traytor: of which yet at last he warned him at his last supper. So *Ester* calleth *Haman* to her banquet, because it is not forbidden to do good vnto the wicked: she entertaineth him, and after accuseth him to the King; because the benefits bestowed on euill men doth not exempt them from punishment, but make them more inexcusable. Wherefore traytours

Mat. 26.



and treacherous persons are nothing holpen by this example in the covering of their fraudes, deceits and guiles wherby they set vpon good men to oppresse them. Neither is this fact yet rashly to be imitated, but onely the occasion is to be obserued, if any like vnto this shall happen: for in this present world so full of miseries, deceits and entrapings, wee must not onely abstayne  
*1. Thess. 5.* from euill, but also from all shew of  
 22. euill.

The King willingly agreeth vnto *Esters* request, and bringeth *Haman* with him, who accounteth it no small honour, that hee onely was inuited by the *Queene* to accompanie the King. Whiles they were in drinking, the King *Assuerus* requeth his former promise: thinking helike, that *Ester* durst not propose her demaunde for the greatnesse of the thing. Therefore againe hee sayeth, that it shall be in her choise to demaunde euen the halfe of the kingdome. But who can heere sufficiently wonder at the impudencie and blasphemous speeches of the Doctors of the Church of Rome? For one of them

*Gabriell*

Gabriell Biel, is not afrayde to say, that that which *Assuerus* heere offereth to *Ester*, was a figure of those things which God in deede hath bestowed on the *Virgine Marie*, euen the halfe of his kingdome; For whereas, sayeth he, the Father of heauen hath these two the chiefest gifts of his kingdome, Iustice and Mercie, reseruing Iustice vnto himselfe, hee hath graunted Mercie vnto the *Virgine Marie*. Heere hence it is, that amongst them they giue this title vnto her, *The Mother of Mercie*. But let vs leaue those blasphemous speeches, whereof euen the most impudent amongst them are almost ashamed.

Let vs rather heare *Esters* answer, who yet referreth her request vntill the morrow, with that condition, that it will please the King againe the next day to returne with *Haman* vnto the banquet which should be prepared for him. It is not easie to say what moued her to defer her request, whē she had the king so ready & easie to be intreated to grant whatsoever she would. But whatsoever was her purpose, it is certaine that God ruled the thoughts of her heart and her speech, that  
by



by those things which the next morning happened to *Mardocheus*, who by the Kings commandement and the ministerie of *Haman* himselfe did obtaine such solemne honors, she might haue a certaine assurance of obtaining her petition: and that *Haman* who a little before had erected a gallous, a foretoken of his destruction, being throwen downe before by the iudgement both of his owne conscience and of his friends, should haue lesse courage and force to resist; and so fall at last into the pit which he had digged for others. Loe how God directeth the goings, heart, and tongue of them who put their trust in him, and by his most admirable providence, causeth that all things turne to their commoditie and profit, and to the disadvantage and destruction of the aduersaries. Now this speech of *Ester* is full of sweetnesse and humilitie not fayned, permitting all to the Kings pleasure, and arrogating nothing to herselfe. What then had wee neede to do, when we addresse our selues to call vpon God? Is it not most rightfull, that we acknowledge all things to come vnto vs by his fauour, and submit

our selues to his good pleasure? In the meane while *Ester* sufficiently sheweth that shee purposed to demaund some great thing, that the King might be the readyer to graunt that, which she had so long pondered in her minde, and would not rashly vtter vntill time and opportunitie serued. Beholde how the wisdom of the faithfull doth farre passe all the wiles and subtilties of the children of this world. Wherefore let vs imitate this example, and the notable vertues that shine in it, if wee desire to wade out of our miseries and calamities, and let vs place all our confidence in him who onely can open an happie issue to all euils wherewith wee are oppressed, and giueth life in the very gulfe of death, through Iesus Christ, who hath saued vs from death and destruction, to whome be glorie, honor and dominion, for euer. *Amen.*

THE



# THE FOVRTEENTH

## Sermon.

Haman againe being grievously offended, that he is condemned by Mardochæus alone, by the aduise of his friends erecteth a gallies, whereon Mardochæus should be banged, frō the 9. verse, unto the end of the fift Chapter.

9. Then went Haman forth the same day, ioyfull and with a glad heart. But when Haman sawe Mordecai in the Kings gate, that he stood not vp, nor moued for him, then was Haman full of indignation at Mordecai.

10. Neuerthelesse Haman refrained himself, untill he came home; then he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

11. And Haman told them of the glorie of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him, and how he had set him aboue the Princes and seruants of the King.

12. Haman said moreover, yea, Ester the Queene

12. *Queen* did let no man come in with the  
 King to the banquet that she had prepared,  
 save we: and to morrow am I bidden vnto  
 her also with the King.  
 13. But all this doth nothing anayle me, as  
 long as I see Mordecai that Iew sitting at  
 the Kings gate.  
 14. Then said Zeresh his wife, and all his  
 friends vnto him, Let them make a tree  
 of fiftie cubits high, and to morrow speake  
 thou vnto the King, that Mordecai may  
 be hanged thereon: then shalt thou goe  
 ioyfully with the King into the banquet.  
 And the thing pleased Haman, and he  
 caused to make the tree.

**W**Hen the wicked enemies of the  
 Church are in prosperitie, they  
 promise vnto themselves an hap-  
 pie and durable estate, which shall not be  
 troubled by any chance, as in the 10. Psalm  
 ver. 6. it is said: *The wicked saith in his hart,*  
*I shall neuer be remoued, nor be in danger:*  
 and if he haue any enemies, he thinketh  
 only with a breath to beate them downe, as  
 in the 5. vers. he snuffeth at or despiseth all his  
 enemies: or if they deliberat of any thing,  
 he supposeth he shall haue an happy end  
 of



of his counsailes, as in the third verse. The wicked is sayd to glorie or to make his boast of his owne hearts desire. Yet notwithstanding many times by the iust iudgement of God they finde a more contrarie event then they supposed, as in the 7. Psalme, vers. 14. *The wicked travaileth with wickednes, for he hath conceived mischief; but he shall bring forth a lye, that is a vaine thing that shall deceiue him: so that their ioy shall be turned into sorrow, and they made subiect vnto their enemies: yea their counsels shall be turned into snares and ruine for themselves, that when as they suppose to haue attained the end of their designements, and to hold the Church ensnared in their ginnes, so that no hope of escape remayneth; then are themselves neere to ruine & vnto destruction. And all these things doth this historie perspicuously set before our eyes. For hitherto all things haue happened most prosperously vnto this Haman, the most deadly enemy of the Church, euen as his heart could wish, hauing subtilly obtained of the king authority and power to kill all the Iewes, for which he altogether euen leapeth for*

ioy; but he himselfe, seeing the constan-  
cie of *Mardocheus*, doth trouble himselfe  
with his extreme ambition and rage. He  
taketh aduise of his friends, and by their  
counsaile erecteth a gallows vpon  
which himselfe the next day is hanged  
by the most iust and most admirable  
prouidence of God. Now these things  
are proposed vnto vs, that we should not  
be troubled aboue measure, seeing the  
prosperous and ioyfull successe and tri-  
umphs of the enemies of the Church,  
and hearing their threats, wherewith  
as though they had already conque-  
red all, they threaten shamefull death to  
the poore faithfull ones. For God doth  
suffer them patiently, vntill they fall in  
to the pit which themselves had digged, and  
be taken in the snares which they layed for  
others.

*Psal. 7. 15.*

Heere then first let vs see *Hamans*  
ioy, then his sorrowe arising vpon the  
constancie of *Mardocheus*, and at last the  
conclusion of his deliberation. That same  
day *Haman* went forth ioyfull, and with a  
glad heart. No man wile though he were  
ioyfull, who was exalted vnto most high  
honor, endued with great prosperitie,  
belo-



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beloued of the King, accepted with the  
Queene, and whome all men honoured;  
and who also had obtained whatsoeuer  
he could wish against the poore Church  
of God. Ioy and gladnes of it selfe is not  
to be condemned, fith that by nature it is  
planted in all men, to reioyce in their  
owne good and prosperitie; but ioy is  
either good or bad according to the  
minde of him that doth reioyce. His ioy  
is holy and good, who reioyceth for the  
good things which he hath receiued of  
God, without iniurie done vnto his  
neighbour, and giueth him thanks  
therefore: but he who puffed vp with  
his prosperitie, delighteth himselfe with  
the contempt and reproch of his neigh-  
bors, and with stubbornnesse & vnthank-  
fulnesse against God, his ioy is prophane  
& accursed: and those are they of whom

*Lut. 6.25.* Christ speaketh, *Wo vnto you that laugh,*  
*for you shall weepe and lament.* So laughter  
and ioy which are the gifts of God (as it  
appeareth in that which *Paul* speaketh  
*Act. 14. v. 17.* that God filleth the hearts of  
the faithfull with food and gladnesse) re-  
turned by their vnthankfulnesse are  
turned into mourning and misfortune.

Let vs therefore learne in our joy and gladnesse, to acknowledge the true author thereof, and to reioyce in good and honest things, and to keepe a measure in mirth, and especially let vs take heede that it be not hurtfull vnto any, or turne to contempt and disgrace of our brethren. But this joy of *Haman*, was turned on a suddaine into sorrowe and melancholic. For when *Haman* sawe *Mardocheus* in the Kings gate, who did neither arise nor moue himselfe for him, he was inflamed with great rage against him.

Heere let vs first consider the constancie of *Mardocheus*, and then speake afterward of *Hamans* wrath. We heard before, that *Mardocheus* was bolde vpon the most plaine and expresse commandement of God, whereby the *Jewes* were commaunded to haue continuall enimitie with the *Amalekites*, out of whose nation *Haman* sprang: the reason is expresse Exodus. 17. verse. 16. and Deuteron. 25. verse 18. 19. because the *Amalakites* came out to fight with the people in the desert to destroy them. Now by how much the greater that *Haman* pride was and his crueltie against



the Church, so much the more is *Mardocheus* to be commended, that he vouchsafeth not to honor him whom God by an irrevocable decree had commanded to be holden for an enemy, and had appointed to utter ruine and destruction. For among the notes of a good man this is not the last, *to despise the wicked.* *Psal. 15. 4.* Therefore *Mardocheus* did not sinne either in pride or rashnes, or desperatnes, when as he would not bow himselfe before such an enemy, who had sworne the slaughter & ruine of the people of God: but on the contrarie, his constancie is worthie so much the greater praise, by how much the greater and certainer his danger was: and so much the more commendable was his courage, by how much the more the malice and crueltie of his enemy increased. Wherefore this constancie witnesseth that he hath done nothing rashly from the beginning, and that it repented him not, that he had rather obeyed God then man: and that he had not cast off his hope for that bloudie edict proclaimed against him and his nation: and that he was not ashamed of his religion, nor of that testimonie which be

had yelded vnto the truth. This constancie our Lord Iesus Christ requireth in all the faithfull, when he biddeth them *not to be ashamed of him and his word before men, neither to be feared with their threats, neither to feare men, but to feare him who can cast bodie and soule into hell fire.* *Luc. 9. 26. Mat. 10. 26. 28.* This constancie brought forth so many Martyrs and constant Confessors of Christ Iesus, who confessed and defended his truth in the midst of torments. But if any man thinke that *Mardocheus* should haue done better, if he had kept himselfe farther from the kings gate, either at first, or at this time, that *Haman* might not haue been so incensed: I answer, that he was one of the porters of the kings gate, otherwise he had in deede been an impudent fellow, if of purpose he had stood there to prouoke *Haman*: vnlesse perhaps we shall say, that he was moued by some peculiar and extraordinarie motion of Gods Spirit, which the prosperous end did shew. If any except, that although he were one of the porters, yet he might make some excuse for his absence, and not prouoke so mightie an aduersarie against him and his nation: I say that a



strong, faithfull & couragious man, doth not willingly seeke for starting-holes, which may easily turne to his disgrace. Besides that, peradventure they who were the keepers of the kings gate, were so straightly holden to their office, that it was no easie matter for them to be absent, though they vsed some faire shew and  
 22 pretence, though at this day it be vsuall;  
 22 and although he had once or twise absented himselfe, yet could he not always be  
 22 away; now *Haman* alwaies frequented the  
 22 kings house, and passed in and out euery  
 22 day by that gate. Therefore let vs rather admire & imitate this constancie of *Mardocheus*, then seeke out matter against it, or carp and mocke at it: and, so that we find sufficiētly in our heart & conscience by the expresse testimonie of the word of God, that we obey his commandement in not obeying men, let vs little care for the reproches of men, who condemne vs as mad men and obstinate, least we be carried hedlong into destruction. I confesse that earnestly and diligently we ought to desire of God the spirit of wisdom and discretion, least perhaps vnder pretence of zeale and constancie we be drawn

way by some vehement passion of the flesh, or heate of minde. And heere by the way we must vnloose this question, whether at this day a faithfull man knowing the Pope to be Antichrist, such as hee is described, 2. *Thess.* 2. may with a good conscience honor and worship him with those honors which others do? The answer is easie: when as this so great honor is giuen vnto him not ciuilly but religiously, and that he thereby may be acknowledged such an one as he would be accounted, to weete, the head of the Church, the vicar of Christ, the Ambassador of God on earth, nay a God on earth: a faithfull man cannot with a good conscience giue him this honor, nay hee ought not giue him any honor, least by his assent he seeme to confesse that he is such a one as he sayeth he is. And vnto this may that be referred which Saint Iohn sayeth, that he is not so much as to be saluted, which professeth not the doctrine of Christ. And we reade also in the Ecclesiasticall historie, that Saint Iohn would not go into that place where Cerinthus the heretique was. And thus much of *Mardocheus* constancie.



By reason of this fact, *Haman* was very vehemently enflamed with rage. For men are not more angered then to see that they are despised by good men: nor more provoked by any thing, then by seeing the constancie and courage of the godly. Hence also we perceiue, that the ioy of the wicked is not durable, because themselves trouble it with their owne passions vpon very small occasion. For what great matter was there here why *Haman* should so rage? Did it not suffice him that he had attained so great riches, honor, possessions? was it not enough that he was preferred before all the rest of the courtiers, that he was reuerenced of all, beloued of the King, inuited by the Queene, although he were not so honored by *Mardocheus*, who was a base fellow, a captiue, a stranger without fauour, without authoritie? But ambition and the desire of honor can neuer be filled, neither granteth it any rest vnto them whose minds it hath once possessed. With ambition there is mingled a desire of reuenge, and a greedinesse to ouercome all men, and make them subject vnto them at their pleasure, which are

are vehement passions, whereby the vn-  
quiet mind is euer tossed vp and downe,  
so that it cannot long enjoy that good  
which they haue gotten; but by how  
much the lighter the matter is wherewith  
they are offended, so much the more doe  
they waxe madde; vnlesse they bring it  
to passe according to their minde: not  
knowing; that it is not a small vertue to  
correcte smal things, and such as cannot  
hurt: and on the other side, that it is great  
wisedome so to rule his affections, that the  
use and enjoying of those good things  
which they haue gotten be not lost. But  
*Haman* doth litle esteeme whatsoeuer  
riches, estimation, dignitie, and honour,  
which he hath receiued of the King, vn-  
lesse out of hand he be reuenged on *Mardo-  
chaeus*: yet hee is said to haue perforce  
refrained himselfe, and come home to  
aske counsell of his wife and friends. He  
would no doubt willingly haue laid vio-  
lent hands on *Mardocheus*, as reuenge  
and wrath do quickly moue the cruel, but  
he repressed himselfe, because *Mardoche-  
us* was as it were in a sanctuarie, while he  
is in his office in guarding the kings gate:  
and it wold also be accounted a contempt



done vnto the King, to lay bloudie hands on any of his seruantes: besides he thought with himselfe, that it was better that hee should be put to death with shame, keeping therein also some forme of law, then that he should die by open force. Adde herunto, that God doth restraine the furie of the wicked, that they may not execute whatsoever they determine. Hence let vs learn euen by force to restraine our passions, not onely for a time as *Haman* did, that after they may by deceit and guile obtaine a more cruell effect: but that euill desires may altogether bee restrained, and viterly extinguished in vs, that wee may be obedient to Gods will, and drive out of our minde all desire of reuenge, and if we haue any iniurie offered, that we leaue our cause and reuenge vnto him. And thus far of *Haman* anger.

Now being thus full of rage, hee calleth his friends to counsell, and especially his wife *Zeresh* as the chiefe and principall of his counsell. In which thing hee seemeth to deale prudently, as becommeth a wise man: but, neither was the matter of such weight, whereof they did consult: neither

neither ought he to come to counsaile so  
enflamed with anger; neither should he vse  
those counsellours who depended onely  
on his becke, and would say and do all  
things after his lust; neither was the thing  
so hotly to be proposed. And truly hee  
vsed not such counsellours, who will per-  
swade him to any moderation: but those  
who will finde a way how they may spee-  
dily fulfill his furious passion: wherefore  
it is also not any whit to be marueiled at,  
that the conclusion of this counsell was  
so foolish and arrogant. But let vs heare  
how he proposeth the matter, *He sheweth  
them the glory of his riches, and the multitude  
of his children: and all the things wherein the  
King had promoted him, and whereby he had  
exalted him aboue all the Princes & seruants  
of the king: & which was euen the heaping  
vp of his glory, that he only was brought in by  
the Queene with the king to the banquet:  
and that he only was also bidden with the king  
the next day. To what end all this: that he  
might procure the greater enuie to Mar-  
dochaus, and that his fact might seeme the  
more bold and intollerable, & that therby  
he might moue his friends to the like rage  
& reuenge against him, & therefore might  
desire*



desire them to shewe him some speedie way whereby he might be reuenged of his enemie, otherwise he professeth vnto them what miserie he is in. For, saith he, *All this availeth me nothing, at what time soeuer I see this lewe Mardocheus sitting at the Kings gate.* That proude recounting of his riches, the multitude of his children, and the honour and dignitie to which the King had exalted him, is a most certaine testimonie of the munificence, and liberallitie of God towards the wicked, the effects whereof he doth many wayes powre out vpon them: next, that the wicked do sufficiently know, their goods, commodities, and greatnes; but neuer attribute them to their true author, whence it cometh, that they wax wanton in arrogancie, vanitie and foolish presumption: yea and in exceeding crueltie, that it is a capital crime, if any submit not themselves vnto them, and yeeld not vnto them diuine honors. Moreover, the nearer their ende approacheth, the more do they glory and set out their magnificence. But this is aboute all most worthe of obseruation, which out of *Hamans* owne confession is manifest, that the grieve and trouble where-

wherwith the wicked are driven, for that they cannot by and by as they would destroy the godly, who they see cannot be bowed, or brought by any meanes to be subiect to their tyrannicall affections; do let that they cannot haue any taste of their prayse, glorie, riches, honour, and nobilitie of their stocke. So the enemies of the Church of God, to whom at this time all things came to passe as they wished, as abundance of goods, honours, estates, fauours and dignities; yet not content therewith, they desired to see the yttor ruine and overthrow of the faithfull. For when they saw but one only Prince, louing true godlinesse, and taking vpon him the defence of the Church, al their ioy perished and delight, which they shuld haue taken of those honours, riches; and fauors which GOD had in abundance heaped vpon them. Yea and the hatred of the Gospel had taken such deepe roote in the hearts of the poore commons, astonied and bewitched by the conspirators, the successors of *Haman*, that they can abide none who professeth the sincere doctrine of the sonne of God. And what I pray, was the ende and marke of all the counselles  
and



and assemblies of their cleargie, and of all their Preachers: was it not that the people being stirred to vproares, should not suffer any to enioy life, who would not consent together with them to the same idolatrie? So then euen with their owne commodities and in the midst of their quiet are they troubled, whiles they see any one *Mardocheus*, that is, any one that wil constantly strue for god and his truth against the errors, pride, and ambition of Antichrist. Thus haue you the oration of *Haman* to his friends, not from whom hee looked for counsaile, but whome he would kindle with him vnto wrath. But it becommeth vs when we are to deliberate of any matter, not to call to counsell those who will speake for our fauour, and smoothe vp our desires, but graue men, who with all libertie and freedome of speech will admonish vs what is honest, what is profitable: and all passion must be far away from our counsels, they must rather be gouerned by reason, that we may be ready to heare those things, not which please vs, but which are honest and comely. Finally, if we must deliberate of any matter, it must be free to discusse all things

on euery side, to object, to gainesay, that by search there may be found, what shall be most honest and profitable. Wherefore they are wide from the truth and erre most greediously, who asking counsell of their friends, desire to haue their passions approued by them; for instead of counsell, they finde confusion: which here wee see to haue happened vnto *Haman*.

For see I pray, what good counsellours these friends and *Zeresh* his wife were, Let there, say they, be made ready a gallows of fiftie Cubits high, and in the morning speake vnto the King, that they may hang *Mardocheus* upon it; and then go in ioyfull with the King to the banquet: which thing when it seemed good vnto *Haman*, he prepared the gallows.

By this counsell it is plaine, that *Haman* being fierce and cruell, had his wife *Zeresh* and his friends as cruel as himselfe: and therefore by Gods iust iudgement, they were at last wrapped together in the same destruction, God rightfully reuenging so bloudie an aduise.

They aduise that which they thinke the king will easily graunt; seeing *Haman* so greatly in fauour with the King,  
and



and the Kings readinesse alwaies so great in granting his requests. Whereby it cometh to passe, that men waxe more bold in demanding things vnbonest, when as before they haue very easily obtained the like: besides that, that men are allured with fauour and good will to hope for greater things. They do not weigh that the king receiued a great benefite by the care and faithfulness of *Mardocheus*, before Chap. 2, of which fact they could not be ignorant, when as there was open execution done vpon the traytors: they thinke not therefore that such a benefite might come into the kings minde: but they perswade themselves that *Mardocheus* is nothing else but a miserable and vile Iewe without fauour, and already condemned to death: wherehence it cometh, that they counsel no moderate matter to *Haman*, but runne headlong into an inhumanitie. But surely any wise counsellour might thus haue dealt with *Haman*. What stand you vpon *Mardocheus* this Iewe, a man of no account? he is not worthy that you should once thinke of him: do you thinke that your fauour and estimation dependeth vpon him, turne away

away your mind & cogitation from thinking of him, & be carelesse & secure, is hee not already adiudged to death? But wicked men delight in cruel & barbarous counsels: for what needed a gallows of fiftie cubites high, vntlesse it were that not onely they would satisfie their thirst with the blood of an innocent, but also they longed to expose him to all mens sight, with laughter and reproach? So the enemies of our Lord Christ Iesus were not content we see to haue nayled him to the Crosse, but they would haue him hang in the middest betweene two theeves, as a notorious and famous theefe. They adde, that when this is done, he may go in merry vnto the banquet. For the enemies of the Church of God, doo feigne theyr onely ioy in the death of innocents, and doo onely relish with delight, those meates which are sawced with the blood of the faithfull. So *Herodias* doth little *Marc. 6.* care for all the dainties at *Herodes* table, 24. vntlesse *Iohn Baptists* head be brought her in a platter: so furious is the hatred wherewith euery one of the wicked doth persecute gods seruants, & him whom he thinketh to be his enemy. This counsell liked

V

*Haman*



*Haman* well, for it agreed with his passion, and he thought he should easily obtain it. So is it often done to ouer-loose and fearfull Kings, who dare denie nothing to those that are about them: There is nothing so wicked or inhonest, which is not craued at their hands even with hope of obtaining. He thought besides, that it would be a pleasant and a faire shew, if he might see him who would not bow himselfe before him, to hang with shame and infamie on so high a galows. Therefore he setteth vp the gibbet in his owne house, as after we shall see, Chap. 7. vers. 9. Neither was it a hard matter for him to get a tree of such a height, when as in the East the trees are of such a length, that almost it passeth all credit: or else many might be grafted together, and so make the gallows of such height. Neither ought it to seeme strange vnto any, that hee erected such a gibbet, when he was in so great fauour and authoritie, and had the kings Ring, & was next in dignitie vnto the king. So by the iust iudgement of God it commeth to passe, that the worst and most dangerous counsels please the wicked, as the counsel of the false Prophets did to *Achab*, by whose perswasion

perswasion hee went to *Ramoth Gilead*, where he receiued his deathes wound, and his armie was ouerthrowne. And as the wicked are delighted with lies, so are they easily allured by the same as by a bait, that they may be ensnared in their owne deceits. And indeed it is iust, that those who will haue their wicked counsels praised, and allowed, and do please themselves in them, should at the last bee taken in their owne nets. But let vs embrace truth and integritie: let vs vse moderately our ioy and gladnesse, least we abuse our prosperitie; neither let vs suffer our selues to be carried away headlong with our passions: let vs not worke treacherie against any, let vs seeke for counsell at God, who wil be our guide in all our wayes, defending vs by his power, and deliuering vs from all violence and reproach: and whatsoever fall vpon vs heere, at the last hee will saue vs in his kingdome with *Christ Iesus* our Lord, to whom alone be glory, strength, and dominion, for euermore. Amen.

THE



# THE FIFTEENTH

## Sermon.

Of the honor which was given by Haman to Mardochæus, at the Kings commandement, & even by Haman's own appointment, in the 11. first verses of the 6. Chapter.

## CHAP. VI

1. The same night the King slept not: and he commanded to bring the booke of the records and Chronicles; which were read before the King.

2. Then was it found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigtans and Teresh, two of the kings Eunuchs, keepers of the doore, who sought to lay hands on the king Assuerus.

3. Then the King said, what honor and dignitie hath bene given to Mordecai for this? And the kings servants that ministred unto him said, There is nothing done for him.

4. And

4. And the King said, who is in the Court?  
(Now Haman was come into the inner  
Court of the Kings house, that hee might  
speake vnto the King to hang Mordecai  
on the tree that hee had prepared for  
him.)

5. And the Kings seruants said vnto him,  
Behold, Haman standeth in the Court.  
And the King sayde, Let him come  
in.

6. And when Haman came in, the King  
said vnto him, What shall be done vn-  
to the man, whom the King will honour?  
Then Haman thought in his heart, to  
whom would the king do honor more then  
to me?

7. And Haman answered the King, the  
man whom the King would honor.

8. Let them bring for him royall apparell,  
which the King useth to weare, and the  
horse that the King rideth vpon, and that  
the crown royal might be set vpon his head.

9. And let the rayment and the horse be de-  
liuered by the hand of one of the Kings  
most Noble Princes, and let them appa-  
rell the man whom the king would honor,  
and cause him to ride vpon the horse thro-  
rough the streets of the Citie, and proclaime



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*before him, Thus shall it be done vnto the man, whom the king will honor.*

**IO.** *Then the King said to Haman, Make haste, take the rayment and the horse as thou hast said, and do so vnto Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the Kings gate: let nothing faile of all that thou hast spoken.*

**II.** *So Haman tooke the rayment and the horse, and arayed Mordecai, and brought him on horsebacke through the streete of the Citie, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King will honor.*

**VV**E are not more troubled almost with any thing in the order which God keepeth in the gouerning and administration of this world, then when we perceiue the wicked to florish and bee in prosperitie, when in the meane while, the good do weepe and mourne. But this perturbation partly springeth from this, because we looke not beyond the bounds of this life: partly, for that by reason of our impatience, wee cannot expect the notable effects of Gods iudgements; which oftentimes in this world he turneth

on

on the head of the wicked and vngodly, when the good are meane while deliuered. That therefore we may meet with this so dangerous a tentation, we must often call to minde those sentences which euery where are found in the whole Scriptures, concerning the care which GOD beareth ouer the godly, and concerning the vengeance wherewith he is reuenged of the wicked: as that which is set downe Psal. 33. vers. 18. 19. *Behold the eye of the Lord is vpon them that feare him, and that put their trust in his mercie, To deliuer their soule from death, and to preserue them in famine. and Psal. 53. 6. That God will breake the bones of the enemies. And Psal. 58. 6. 11. That God will breake the teeth of the vngodly: and that men shall say, verily there is frute for the righteous; doubtles there is a God that iudgeth in the earth.* Besides, we must often set before our eyes the notable and memorable Histories of the iudgements of GOD, whereof the holy Scripture is full, and which the experience of all ages wil abundantly afford vnto vs, if we be diligent in obseruing of them.

Such is that which in this Historie is



proposed, in which as in a liuely Image we see, that God after hee hath tryed his, doth deliuer them from reproach and affliction, & doth lift them vp, even by the hands & mouth of their enemies: whom on the contrary hee doth ouerwhelme with shame and confusion, bringing to nought their counsels and wicked practises. For behold *Mardocheus*, who out of sorrow and mourning, yea even out of death it selfe, is drawne on the sudden to great honors, the which the kings of *Persia* did not bestow greater on their brauest courtiers & dearest fauourites, *Affuerus* fitly calling to minde the benefit which hee had receiued at the hand of *Mardocheus*. And *Haman* at vnawares doth himselfe set downe the maner of this rare & extraordinary honor, & is the first author of it vnto the king: & afterward is compelled with his owne hand to performe that which he had prescribed. In which action the singular & admirable prouidence of God doth shine, seeing that all things were so conveniently and fitly done to wit, the kings waking, who could not sleepe all night; the reading out of the Chronicles, which he commandeth to be done before him; and

and therein the remembrance of *Mardocheus* benefit occurring; the readie will of the king to recompence is; *Hamans* so fit comming, though to another end; the question proposed by the king, of him whome the king would honour; *Hamans* answere and conceit of himselfe; and the kings commandement of leading *Mardocheus* with triumph through the citie: that in this narration especially, if euer in any, there appeareth the truth of this common prouerbe, *To him that awayteth, all things fall out fitly.* For what could happen more to be wished for, what more conuenient, as well for *Ester* and *Mardocheus*, as for all the *Jewes*, then that which heere God doth dispose, commanding so many contrarie things to meete heerein together, to the consolation of the godly, who were greatly oppressed, and to the confusion and shame of *Haman* and his confederates? Let vs then more diligently weigh euery particular, that we may the better taste the most wise counsaile of God in all things, and his wonderfull government, and that wee may acknowledge how good and gentle he is towards his, and how



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sharp and fenere to his enemies.

First therefore there is declared, that when the King could not sleepe, he commanded that they should reade vnto him the booke of the records, that is, the Chronicles. Memorable is that night, because in it by Gods purpose and prouidence there was prepared a remedie, whereby the Church should be deliuered from all her feare and danger, and *Hamans* pride should be beaten downe, and all the enemies of the Church confounded. And as *Assuerus* tooke not his rest, perhaps doubtful what the *Q. Ester* his wife would demand, so it is likely that *Ester* also was carefull by what meanes she might best speake vnto the king, and propound her request vnto him: and that *Mardocheus* was in great feare, by reason of *Hamans* furie, whereof he could not be ignorant, when as the galowes was already set vp, neither would *Haman* cease, vntill he had reuēged himself, and brought his furious purposes to an end. So good men watch in defence of the Church and their owne safegard, the wicked watch for their destruction & ouerthrow of the godly, and God taketh away sleepe from the King, that

that by his meanes he may prouide for the  
safetie of his, and heape confusion on *Ha-*  
*mans* head. Although therefore the kings  
 sleepe was hindred by some natural cause,  
 yet God of purpose would haue him to  
 watch, and sent into his heart a desire to  
 heare the historie of his owne time. So  
 God either sendeth or taketh away sleepe  
 as semeth good vnto himselfe for the pro-  
 fit of those whom he will help, so that he  
 oftentimes waketh who would gladly  
 sleepe, and he sleepeth who would wil-  
 lingly awake, God by this meanes furde-  
 ring his worke, men for the most part not  
 knowing it, or thinking of it, vntill Gods  
 decree be executed. Heerehence it ap-  
 peareth, that the kings in those times, were  
 not like the kings of our time, who turne  
 the day into night: sleeping in the day,  
 because they will not do the works of the  
 light: & passing the night without sleepe,  
 because they are delighted with the works  
 of darknes. I cōfesse that is true which the  
 Greeke Poet hath: *A counsellor ought not*  
 *to sleepe all night:* but to passe whole nights  
 in pleasures and delights, and to neglect  
 ones duty, is the part of mad men, not on-  
 ly overthrowing al modestie & honestie,  
 but



but also the very order of nature. But this is to be commended in the king, that for the ease of his minde, and not to loose that time wherein he could not sleepe, he commanded not bookes of loue, not fables, not trifles to be read vnto him, which at this day courtiers both night and day delight in, but the historie of things done in his time faithfully written, as before we haue seene about the end of the second Chapter. For I pray, who ought rather to be skilfull in histories, and especially of their owne kingdomes then Kings, whereout they may learne examples of all sorts to enforme their manners and iudgement, and that they may know what is well done, what ill. Is it not a great shame that Kings know nothing of the affayres of their state, but by the relation of others? Heere hence wee learne, how profitable it is to haue certaine and true histories to be written and those to be read also of them who haue the gouernment of the commonwealth. For otherwise what doth it auail to haue good and faithfull histories written if they be not read? By the example also of this King wee learne, what we should

should do when sleepe forsaketh vs, to  
wecte, either reade things profitable, as  
are the sacred histories, and whatsoever is  
contained in Gods most holy word; or  
at least repeate and record in memorie,  
those good things which we haue seene,  
heard, or read; taking heed that we be not  
troubled or ynquiet, either in bodie or  
minde.

Neither was it by fortune or chance,  
that this historie of the conspiracie of  
*Bigtan* and *Tereſh* against the king de-  
ected by *Mardocheus*, was read vnto the  
king: but by Gods will, that the king  
might call to mind, which he had forgot,  
the benefite receiued by his fidelitie and  
watchfulnesse, and so yeeld recompence  
or preservation of his life. That happe-  
ned about foure yeeres after that *Ester*  
was preferred to the dignitie royal, which  
was in the seuenth yeere of the king *As-*  
*uerus*: and the things which heere are  
recited, fell out in the twelfth yeere. So  
long a space of time did passe, wherein  
the king remembered not so great a be-  
efite, or did yeeld requitall to *Mardo-*  
*cheus* who had so well deserued it. Al-  
though in this respect, the king was not  
without



without fault, as shewing thereby an vn-  
 thankful mind and forgetfull of a benefit  
 receiued, yet notwithstanding God did  
 deferre the recōpence of that benefit vnto  
 a better time, & more cōmodious oppor-  
 tunitie, as well for *Mardocheus*, as for his  
 whole nation; and besides, for the ouertur-  
 ning of *Hamāns* deuises with greter shame;  
 then if by and by after the good turne  
 performed he had receiued his reward.  
 The requitall then of things well done  
 neuer perisheth with God, and although  
 their reward many times be deferred, yet  
 is it not takē away, whether God requite  
 it by those who haue receiued them, or by  
 others, or whether himselfe of his meete  
 grace & liberalitie do recompence those  
 that haue well deserued. Let vs not then  
 at any time be weary in well doing be-  
 cause of mēs ynthankfull minds, for at the  
 last, though God seeme to slacke it for a  
 time, yet shall we reape most abundant  
 fruit of those things which we haue well  
 done by the direction of his word & the  
 light of faith. For those things which are  
 well done, are more faithfully recorded  
 in the Lords booke, then in any records  
 of the histories of this world.

See now how God stirreth vp the minde of *Assuerus* by the reading of this historie, for he demandeth, *What honour and dignitie hath been giuen to Mordecai for this,* and vnderstanding by his seruants, that there had been nothing done for him, he doth with aduised deliberation purpose to do it. Who can doubt but that this motion of his mind came frō God, by whom only the wils of men are disposed and enclined vnto good? For vnlesse God by some secret force of his had wrought herein, what hope was there that the king, who when he had the fact of *Mardocheus* as yet in fresh memorie, did not care or thinke of requitall of it, at which time it seemeth he would rather haue done it, because lately he was deliuered out of the danger of death, and conspiracies of the traytours: what hope I say was there that hee should be stirred vp, so long after with the dead reading to thinke of the benefite receiued by *Mardocheus* fidelitie and to requite it? For it cometh to passe for the most part, that vnlesse whiles the benefite is fresh in memorie it be requited, the grace & estimation of it perisheth in procelle of time, as



men are wont in time to forget those good turnes which we haue receiued either of God or man: as the old prouerbe witnesseth; *The memorie of a good turne sleepeth.* That the king therefore asketh whether any honor or recompence hath been done to *Mardocheus*, for it doth shew, that for these foure yeeres in this respect his mind had been very forgetfull. For who should haue been more mindfull then himselfe, either of a benefit receiued, or of not recompencing it? And yet his seruants remember it better then he. Howbeit God so long a time after, doth not only reuiue it and call it to memorie, but also giue a desire to requite it. For these principles are ingrafted by nature in euery one, that euery good turne deserueth a reward, and that the reward must be equall to the benefit. Now what greater benefit can kings receiue, then to haue their life preserued from the conspiracie of traytours, and so with their life to haue their states defended? Rightly therefore doth the king thinke that this dutie was worthie to be requited with honour and preferment, and doth also determine to performe it. And would to

God

God that this principle might take deepe roote in the minds of all of what degree soeuer they be, high, meane, or low, that those who haue deserued well of vs, are to be rewarded and honoured according to the abilitie of euery one who receiueth a benefit: for then should we not dayly see so many vnthankfull mindes, & much lesse so much peruersenesse in altering and extenuating of those benefits which good men haue done, whether to their King, or to their countrie, or to their friends and neighbours. For what can remaine sound in the publique state and societie of man, if you take away the punishment of wickednes, and the reward of well doing? The King then doth very well in enquiring whether *Mardocheus* hath receiued an honour for reward of his fidelitie: the seruants do better, who remembering wel all those things which had passed, do certifie the king of the truth of the matter. And surely it is seemely that the seruants of Princes should so marke what is done, that when neede shall require, they may be sure to render a faithfull testimonie of euerie thing; not altering any thing either for



hatred or for fauour, which yet courtiers are wont to do.

The good minde and vnfayned good will of the king to do *Mardocheus* good, is thereby apparant, that euen early in the morning hee enquireth who of the courtiers were in the court, that he might consult with them about the honouring of *Mardocheus* according to his minde. And it seemeth that the reading, and the communication of the king with his seruants, continued euen vntill the morning, that together with the light of the day, God also might bring some light of deliuerance and safetie vnto him who by the most cruell determination of his enimie was condemned to a shamefull death. Heere the most notable and euident providence of God doth appeare, that *Assuerus* doth not determine of himselfe, neither taketh counsaile with his seruants who were present, what reward and honor *Mardocheus* should haue, nor in what maner or by whome this honor should be done vnto him. For perhaps it neuer would haue come into the kings minde or the mindes of his seruants, to haue deuised such a kinde of honor for

*Mardo*

*Mardocheus*, as *Haman* prescribed when he was demanded. Loe how God doth leade and direct the wils and counsailes, the times and seasons, yea the words and talke of mē by his hidden prouidence, to fulfill that which he hath decreed; and that euen when men know not of it, and thinke or deliberat of nothing lesse then to obey Gods will, or performe & serue his purpose & prouidence: on which yet alone we ought to depend, bending our intent wholly on this, to do our duetie faithfully, obey him, and place our whole cōfidence in him. Behold then how *Haman* when he came to desire that *Mardocheus* might be hanged on a gibbet, is most fitly by God and the king chosen, to set downe the sentence of most high honour to be bestowed on *Mardocheus*, and himselfe to be the minister thereof: and by this meanes yeeld vnto him most exceeding honor, whome he went about to bring to extreme shame and violent death. *Haman* was come very early in the morning to satisfie his vnlatiable desire of reuenge, by obtaining authoritie to destroy *Mardocheus* with a shameful death. So at this day the deadly enemies of the



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Church sleepe not, neither giue themselves any rest, but continually are in the Kings house, and stand at his elbow, and neuer leaue crying in the eares both of the king, and of all that are in any fauour and authoritie with him, to encourage them to the destruction of the whole Church. *Haman* is called in out of the vtter court, because (as we haue heard) it was not lawfull for any to go in any farther, vnlesse he were called by name. Now that he was exceeding ioyfull it is likely: for he thought that by this meanes there was most fit occasion offered vnto him, to obtayne his bloudie demaund. That *Haman* of our time, that day that he was called earely vnto the king, to receive the due reward for his deserts, did marueilouslie reioyce, thinking that there was occasion offered vnto him  
*Luc. 6. 25.* vtterly to destroy and roote out the faithfull professors of the Gospell. But the matter fell farre otherwise then *Haman* supposed, although allured by the first speech of the kings, hee nourish great hope in his minde, and did promise vnto himselfe greater honors then hitherto hee had enioyed. *Assuervus*  
there-

therefore asketh him, *What shall be done vnto the man, with whose honour the King is delighted?* Wisely doth *Affuerus* suppress his name whome hee would honour: but that wisdom came from God, who would haue those honours due vnto *Mardocheus*, to be appointed and described by the mouth and counsaile of his most deadly enemy. For otherwise it is not probable that *Affuerus* would mocke *Haman*, or go about to intrap him: but God did pitch the nets for this proude and craftie enemy.

Moreover the Holy Ghost doth open vnto vs the proude thoughts of *Haman*, when he is sayd thus to haue pondered in his minde, *Whome would the King rather bring to honour then me?* So God is wont often to lay open the secret thoughts of his enemies, that hee may laugh at their pride, make knowen their insolencie & wantonnesse, and shew the to be altogether inexcusable. Of this sort were the foolish imaginations of the mother of *Sisera*, who when she perceiued that her sonnes chariots stayed, perswadeth her selfe that he was busie in deuinding the spoiles, and that euen then whē

*Ind. 5. 28.*

*29. 30.*



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*Isai. 14. 13.* he was dead, being ignobly slaine by *Iael* a woman. So *Isai*, doth deride the foolish boastings of the king of *Babylon*, as though he would climbe vp aboute the cloudes, and place his throne and seate in heauen, and make himselfe equall with God. So the thoughts of *Nabuchadnezzar* are detected, when he said in his hart,

*Dan. 4. 30* *Is not this that great Babylon, whose foundation my hands haue layed?* Heere hence we learne by experience, that the ambitious are neuer filled with honor: and although they be most wicked & vnworthie, yet they thinke theselues worthie of all honor & magnificence: as this *Haman* heere perswades himselfe, that he alone amongst al the rest was worthy that honor which the king meant to bestow vpon any: and that he only deserued such great honours as any man was able to deuise. So

*Prou. 16. 18.* are the wicked wont to build castles in the ayre, euen when their destruction hangeth ouer their heads, as *Salomon* excellently describeth, *Pride goeth before destruction, and an high minde before a fall.* Wherefore we ought to hold for suspected, all vaine hope of glorie and magnificence due vnto vs, wherewith we feede

our

our fantasies : and then to feare the greater fall, when we go about to be exalted aboue our measure. Let vs rather imitate *Dauids* modestie, so that we may truely glorie with him : *Lord, mine heart is not haughtie, neither are mine eyes loftie, neither haue I walked in great matters which are too high for mee.* *Psal. 131.*

Wherefore *Haman* thinking that hee shall pronounce sentence of honours to be bestowed on himselfe, doth thus answer to the kings question, *That the man whome the King would honour shall (1) be apparelled with the Kings apparell, (2) be carryed upon the Kings horse, (3) haue the Kings crowne set upon his head, (4) and that by one of the chiefe Princes : (5) and so to be lead with triumph thorough the streetes of the citie, (6) to haue proclaymed before him, Thus shall it be done vnto the man whome the King will honour.* *Haman* makes no mention of gifts or rewards to be bestowed on him whom the king wold honour, he had forsooth riches sufficient, and he was only desirous of honour. And it might be that he had this hope in himselfe, that when hee was exalted unto so high dignity, he might easily take



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what occasions he lifted to get riches. That *Haman* of our age, thought himselfe worthie no lesse honour then this did: nay rather it is euident that he aspired to somewhat more, and indeede to haue desired the kings apparrell that hee might spoyle the king thereof; to be carryed on the kings horse, that he might make him go on foote; and to put the kings crowne vpon his head, that he might thrust him into a monasterie: and so having deposed his king, he might vse the seruice of the Peers of the bloud royall, and be carryed with triumph through the cities royall, and commaund to be proclaymed, not by one but by all; not thus shal it be done to the man whom the king will honour; but God saue the king: him who is worthier of the kingdome then the king himselfe. When ambition hath taken roote in the mindes of Nobles, it can abide no moderation, but desireth to be lifted vp aboue all dignitie and excellencie. But how can it be that warlike men made drunke with the wine of the fornications of that whore of *Rome* should not do thus, when that whore dareth to lift vp her selfe aboue all that is called God?

2. *Thes.* 2. 4.

God? Thus haue you *Hamans* aduise, promising vnto himselfe royal triumphes, but the foole fell farre from his imagination, which let vs consider out of the kings decree expressed in these words: *Make haste, saith he, take the apparell and the horse as thou hast said, and do so to Mardocheus the Iew, who sitteth in the kings gate: omit not any thing of all that which thou hast spoken.* The prouidence of God is to be obserued in this commandement of the kings, who so suddenly changed the Kings will, that he would command this Courtier so beloued, so magnified to serue *Mardocheus*, and to be compelled to so base an office, from so high a degree of honour: and this is so much the more to be obserued, because the King could not be ignorant, with how great hatred *Haman* followed all the Iewes. Now Kings are not wont for a light cause without offence so hardly to entreate and debase their deare attendants and those whom they haue magnified aboue the rest: but heere the kings commandement is straight and precise: *Make hast, take the apparell, do as thou hast said, omit nothing of that which thou hast spoken.* What could a man more straightly



enioyne his seruant? But God would haue the King speake thus peremptorily, that *Haman* might be terrified, and his pride beaten downe, neither that he should flee vnto the excellencie of his dignitie, but that he should execute the aduise which he himselfe had giuen. Such is the estate and condition of Courtiers, that after the lust of Kings, and at a word they are suddenly lifted vp, and suddenly throwne downe: so changeable and vnconstant is their condition and dignitie, which hangeth vpon that slender and rotten threed of mans fauour: Who oftentimes to make shew of his power, is delighted with such sudden changes, throwing downe those whom he hath lifted vp: treading vnder fecte, those whom before hee did extoll: ouerwhelming with shame, those whom they had ennobled with honor: finally, vsing them as things created by themselves, and that worthily, seeing the courtiers are delighted with this maner of creation, with wicked sacriledge, transferring vnto men, that which is due vnto god alone.

*Haman* affrighted with this voyce, neither dareth answer, nor resist: but, though

though against his will, executeth that which hee was commaunded. Heereby appeareth how great the authoritie and power of *Assuerus* was, to wit, absolute; such as at this day the Turke doth exercise ouer all his subiects. And heere also appeareth the cowardise and base minde of *Haman*. He might (as it seemeth) object many things; to wit, that this Iewe was, his most hatefull enemy: already condemned by the Kings proclamation: that he was rebellious against the Kings commandement of honouring him: that it should not bee honourable for the King to bestowe so great honours vpon a man of so base estate: that his benefite was not so great, which proceeded not from any manlinesse or courage, but onely from the bare reporting of words which might bee by any the most cowardly slaue, who should not therefore bee accounted worthy so great honour: finally, if hee had objected nothing else but that hee could not in a matter so base, cast downe himself before his most deadly enemy, it might haue bene sufficient: for had it not bene  
farre



farre more commendable for him before men, to haue dyed manfully, then to against his will to frame himselfe vnto the Kings will? But this for the most part, is the nature and disposition of them who place their hope and felicitie in the grace and fauour of Princes, that they do most seruilely abase themselves to the ministration of many things, which ought to be vnto them more greuous then death it selfe. So God oftentimes is wont to throw down their courage who seeme that they will rather die for madde, then to yeelde but one iotte of their dignitie and magnificence.

Marke heere a wonderfull change in the persons, as well of *Haman* as of *Mordechaius*. For *Haman* is compelled to appeare before him whom he desired to spoyle, and to carrie him vpon horsebacke, of whom hee would needes be adored; to adorne his head with the Crowne royall, whose necke he desired to breake with an halberd; to prepare a triumphe for him, for whom he had erected a gallowes; and to proclaim before him whom hee would haue oppressed with reproach, Thus shall it be done to the man, whom the King will bring

our! Finally, *Haman* heere is compelled  
to play the part of a seruant, in apparelling  
of *Mardocheus*; of a horseman, in helping  
him to horse; of an vscher, in going before  
him; and of a cryer, in proclaiming his ho-  
nour.

On the other side, *Mardocheus* beeing  
oppressed with teares and sorrow, is ap-  
parelled with gladnesse: he that lay in the  
dust, is carried on the kings horse: he that  
together was swallowed vp with sad-  
nesse, is Crowned with ioy: hee who was  
appointed to a shamefull death, is honou-  
red, and that by him who had wrought all  
these mischiefes against him. Worthily  
then might this faithfull seruant of God  
crie out, the *Imocent* shall not loose his la-  
bour: How pretious is thy goodnesse o  
God, to them that put their trust vnder  
the shadow of thy wings! and that: \* How  
great is thy goodnesse which thou hast layd vp  
for those that feare thee! and that Salua-  
tion belongeth vnto God: & also that Thou  
thou shalt lift vp my horne as the horne of an Uni-  
orne, for I am annoynted with fresh oyle; And  
mine eye shall behold thy iudgements, against  
those that lie await for me. Now these  
things are written, not that out of them  
euery

Pf. 31. 20. 21

Pf. 37. 39.

Pf. 92. 11. 12.



Ps. 37. 6.

every one of vs should imagine to him-  
 selfe the like triumphes that *Mardocheus*  
 had, or like honour in this world: but let  
 it suffice vs to haue made triall, that God  
 is the defender of our honor, and that hee  
*wil bring forth thy righteousness as the light,*  
*& thy iustice as the noon-day:* that those who  
 desired to see vs ouerwhelmed with shame  
 and slaunders, shall be compelled to ap-  
 proue the righteousness of our cause, and  
 to honour our right: yea euen the very e-  
 nemies of the truth shall be compelled to  
 acknowledge the innocencie of the Mar-  
 tyrs, and of those whom they haue perse-  
 cuted. The full accomplishment and ef-  
 fect whereof if wee see not in this world,  
 at the last when the time of refreshing  
 shall come, wee shall behold it. Where-  
 fore take courage my brethren, let vs fol-  
 low righteousness and innocencie; let  
 vs constantly suffer the crosse of Christ  
 Iesus; let vs not enuie at the prosperitie  
 of the wicked; let vs repose our hope in  
 the grace of our G O D; let vs waite  
 for the event of his promises, and we  
 shall see at length the confusion and  
 utter destruction of his and our ene-  
 mies; and shall bee Crowned at the last

last with glorie and felicitie in the life everlasting with Christ Iesus our Lord, to whom onely be power, glory, and dominion, for euermore. Amen.

## THE SIXTEENTH Sermon.

*Hamā being beaten downe with sorrow  
hides himselfe at home, and asketh  
counsell of his friends, who depounce  
vnto him a wofull euent: thence hee is  
called with haste vnto the banquet,  
which is turned into a snare and deadly  
net vnto him. From v. 12. of this  
6. Chapter, vnto the third verse of  
the next.*

12. *And Mordecai came againe to the  
Kings gate, but Haman hasted home  
mourning and his head couered.*

13. *And Haman tolde Zeresh his wife,  
and all his friends, al that had befallen him.  
Then said his wife men and Zeresh his  
wife vnto him, Seeing Mordecai is of  
the seed of the Iewes, before whom thou  
hast*



hast begun to fall, thou shalt not preuaile  
against him, but shalt surely fall before  
him.

14. And while they were yet talking with  
him, the Kings Eunuches came, and hastened  
to bring Haman to the banquet that Ester  
had prepared.

## CHAP. VII.

1. So when the King and Haman came to  
the banquet with the Queene Ester:
2. The King said againe vnto Ester on the  
second day, at the banquet of Wine, what  
is thy petition. Queene Ester, and it shall be  
giuen thee? and what is thy request?  
shall be euen performed vnto the halfe  
of the Kingdome.

**W**HEN as the Lord once beginneth to draw the most cruell enemies of his church into iudgement, to execute vengeance vpon them according to the desert of their pride and crueltie, suddenly are they seene to be intangled in the bands of their iniquitie, amazed with sorrow and mourning overwhelmed

overwhelmed with shame to seeke to  
hide themselves, to be condemned by  
their owne friends; and sentence to be  
pronounced against them in the midst  
of their delights, when they looked for  
comfort in their distress. Which here  
we see to happen vnto *Human*, who when  
on the sudden he was fallen fro his hope,  
hied him home with his head couered  
by reaso of his exceeding sorrow. Se there  
he heareth sentence to bee pronounced  
against him; that most assuredly he shall  
fall, seeing he hath to doe with the Tower.  
Thence he brought vnto the banquet  
with the King and the Queene: but that  
table was vnto him a iudgement seate of  
condemnation, at which, as anon after we  
shall heare, iudgement is giuen against  
him: that here may be an example of the  
dreadfull vengeance of God vpon his e-  
nemies; when once he hath turned his an-  
gry countenance against them. And  
this is that which is spoken, *Psal. 39. 12.*  
*When thou wilt rebuke, dost chastise man  
or iniquity; thou as a moth makest his  
garment to consume.* And in another place,  
*Psal. 68. 1. 2.* *Let God arise; and his ene-  
mies shall be scattered; they also that hate*



him shall flee before him: As the smoke  
 vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away,  
 and as waxe melteth before the fire, so shall  
 the wicked perish at the presence of God.  
 Heere also we see that fulfilled which is  
 spoken by Eliphaz, Job. 5. 13. God taketh  
 the wise in their craftinesse, and the counsell  
 of the wicked is made foolishnesse: and that  
 which the wise man speaketh in the Pro-  
 verbes, Chap. 11. 6. 8. The transgressors  
 shall be taken in their owne wickednesse, when  
 the righteousnesse of the iust shall deliuer him.  
 And The righteous escapeth out of trouble,  
 and the wicked cometh in his stead. But  
 yet notwithstanding, this is not to be  
 drawne into a generall rule, as though  
 God dealt withall the wicked after this  
 manner in this world: or as though they  
 were all to be accounted wicked and vn-  
 righteous, as many as are oppressed with  
 great and sudden calamities. For many  
 good men are oftentimes shaken with  
 the greatest miseries and sorrowes in this  
 life, and on the contrary part, many wic-  
 ked & vngodly men liue in prosperitie, &  
 die quietly, as though they had escaped  
 gods hand. Howbeit god doth oftentimes  
 shew forth in this world, notable signes of

his wrath against the enemies of his truth: Which although he execute after diuers sorts, yet this in generall is most euident, that they are overwhelmed with sudden mischiefe, as a woman with childe, and so heare their condemnation before their death, even by their dearest and nearest friends: and that oftentimes the place where they imagined to find rest and quiet, is turned vnto a deadly baite. And these things in generall are most worthy the noting in this Historie, but let vs also discusse euery part thereof.

First here is offered the modestie of *Mardocheus*, who hauing receiued that honor which we haue spoken of before, returneth to his ordinarie office (as it seemeth) to wit, to the Kings gate: testifying thereby, that his minde did not swell with any pride, but to thinke of his due with feare & carefulnesse, and to remember that he is not yet deliuered from all danger, that Edict remaining yet written against the Iewes. Besides, that honour bestowed vpon him, although it were very great and almost immeasurable, in regard of his state, passed away in one morning, that rightly it may bee sayd,



if he receiued none other reward, that it  
was honour without gaine, yea honour full  
of vain ostentation and pride onely, and  
of no firme and stable dignitie. But these  
were but an entrance & a shew before of  
greater and more continuall honor to fol-  
low, when *Haman* malice was detected,  
and worthily punished.

Here hence therefore wee learne,  
not to bee puffed vp and waxe insolent  
with any courtly grace & fauour, or any  
other honor. For the fauour of men is  
momentanie, and all honor slideth away,  
and vanissheth as smoake into the ayre.  
It remaineth that wee vse it well, to the  
defence and commoditie of the Church,  
and depend altogether vpon Gods good-  
nesse, not placing our trust in any earthly  
Prince, seeing that the greatest and most  
mightie Princes are nothing else but va-  
nitie, nay altogether lighter then vanitie: as  
it is said, *Psalm. 62. 9.* Let vs beware there-  
fore, that we be not turned away the least  
bit from our dutie, by any blast of court-  
ly grace or fauour, or from any honest  
thought which becometh vs, and our  
State, and which we ought to preferre be-  
fore all things, euen the most precious.

And

upon the bank of Eſter. 329

And thus farre reaching *Mardoobus*,  
who though hee thought modestly of  
himselfe, yet he did not cease to comfort  
and cheere vp himselfe, considering and  
beholding with himselfe the wonderfull  
gouernance of the Lord, who had defend-  
ed his right, and brought his integrity  
into light; and honoured his pietie and  
righteousnesse, striking that proud *A-  
man* on the other side with feare and as-  
tonishment, when he had deliuered his life  
out of his bloudie hands. So Christian  
modestie doth not hinder, but that wee  
may reioyce in those good and profita-  
ble things which are offered vs from God,  
and magnifie the vprightnesse of his  
iudgements, as it is said, *Psal. 52. 6. 7.* The  
righteous seeing the overthrow of the wicked  
which boasted of their wickednesse, shall  
laugh, and giue God continuall thanks  
for his iudgements. So we see *Dauid* of-  
tentimes to reioyce, that God had bro-  
ken the cheek-bone of his enemies, and their  
teeth in their mouth: and that hee sawe  
those who came with open mouth to de-  
voure him, to be destroyed. But we must  
take especial heed we mingle not carnall  
and fleshly ioy, with that spiritual ioy  
which

*Psal. 3. 7. 8.*  
27. 2.



which springeth from the spirit of God, and a right zeale of his glorie. Loe heere the ioy and gladnesse of *Mardocheus*.

Let vs here now on the contrary *Haman* sorrow and mourning. He basted him *bare mourning* and his head covered. This he did according to the maner & custome of those times, that those who had receiued any notable calamitie, did couer their heads in signe of that sorrowe and griefe which they felt in themselves: that if it were possible they would neither see any body, nor be seene by any. So *Dauid* fleeing from *Ierusalem*, for feare of *Absalom*, went bare-footed & his head covered, by this signe testifying his great sorrowe which he had for the treason of his son, his people, and of him whom he supposed to haue bin a faithful counsellor, *Achitophel*. So that as in prosperous matters, by reason of ioy we lift vp our head & countenance, as *Dauid* did professe of himself, *Thou liftest up my horne as the horne of a Unicorne*, and makest me to walke, with an ypright countenance: so on the contrary, sadnesse throweth downe a mans countenance, and harmes receiued, do couer the head with shame and disgrace.

but Loe heere then *Haman*, who promi-  
sed himfelfe high honors and great mag-  
nificence, is overwhelmed with shame &  
reproach: in figne whereof hee covereth  
his head, either with the lap of his garment  
or with somewhat else. Beholde him  
throwne downe with sorrow, grieve, and  
feare, which God useth as Bayliffes and  
Seriants, to draw the wicked into iudge-  
ment; that they may leaue off to waxe  
proud in their fond cogitations & vaine  
hope. And surely *Hamans* is not sorrow-  
full without cause, partly because hee see-  
med to loose that fauour and place which  
before he had with the King; partly be-  
cause that he was so abased, before *Morde-  
chais*, whom hee esteemed no better  
then a dogge; and was forced to bee  
vnto him, whome hee iudged  
worthe no light but the gallows; who  
could neuer be brought to bowe himselfe  
before *Hamans*, whom yet all other Cour-  
tiers did honour.

But in very deepe, so must the  
wicked who haue prouoked the Lord  
vnto wrath, and haue risen vppe  
against his inheritance, so I saye,  
must they bee pressed with



sorrow and fear, without with shame and reproach; which thing wee see David doth most times pray for, against the enemies of the Church: as that Psalm 91. 13. Let him be clothed with russet, and a garment, and let it come as water into his bowels, and like oyle into his bones. Let him be unto him as a cloake to cover him, and as a gyrdle, as he is a viceroy girded with truth. Al-

Pf. 55. 15.

so, Let darkness be upon them; let them be as doona quicke into the grave. And

Pf. 69. 27.

again, Let iniquities upon them iniquities, and let them be as the smoke of a fire. Wor- 28. rily to be doth he is overblinded with sorrow and shame, who went about the overthrow and destruction of the whole Church of God. By this we learn, that we must give diligent heed, that we go not about to make hurt or mischief unto any, if we will have our followers to be assured by the consolation of the Holy Ghost, and not to have them made deadly and incurable, as was this sorrow of Solomon, who seeking solace for his evil in his house, among his friends and familiars found none, where more matter of dolor and despair. For when he had declared to Zorobabel his wife, and to all his friends, all those things

that had befallen him, he received this only answer of them, Seeing that Mar- docheus is of the ſeede of the Iewes, before whom thou haſt begun to ſell, thou ſhalt not prevaile againſt him, but ſhalt assuredly fall before him. He felt himſelfe alreadie iud- ged within himſelfe: he ſought therefore remedie among his friends, and by them he is adiudged and condemned to de- ſtruction. So it hapned vnto him, which God threatneth vnto the wicked by the prophet Amos: what if they ſled from a Lyon, a Beare ſhould meete him, and if he went in to the houſe and leaned on the wall, a Serpent ſhould bite him. In this counſell of his friends, Haman makes no mention, as be- fore of his riches, nor of the multitude of his children, nor of all that dignitie wher- with the king had magnified him, but he is compelled to ſpeake of his ſhame and folly. For he reckoneth vp particularly whatſoever came to paſſe, to wecte, that the king propoſed the queſtion vnto him, of him whome he would honour; his answer vnto it; the hope that he had conceived in his mind; the ſtraight com- mandement of the king to do all that ho- nor which he had ſet downe vnto Mar-

Amos. 5.

19.



*Mardocheus*: finally, how all things came to passe contrarie to his expectation. This being done, and his wound discouered to his friends and familiars, he sought of them a remedie, whereby either it might be healed throughly, or at least by some meanes mitigated. Heere is no mention made of seeking vnto God in prayer, or of repentance, or of asking pardon, but onely deceits and wiles to escape the hande of God that did persecute him: *Haman* perswadeth himselfe that his wife is not to seeke of some deuise, and he hopeth that by his friends meanes, hee shall finde some occasion, whereby by flanders and false surmises hee may make *Mardocheus* odious vnto the King, and at the last triumph ouer him as a conquerour. For the wicked promise vnto themselves deliuerance out of all distresses, by their malice & deceits: but oftentimes, in steed of medicine, they finde poyson. For lo what *Haman's* friends who are called wise men, doe answere in few words, *Assuredly thou shalt fall before Mardocheus*: Why so? Because he is a Jewe, and because thou hast begun to fall before him. They are not without cause

cause heere called wise men, giuing such  
an answer: for although they were not  
endued with the wisdom of Gods spi-  
rit, yet against their wills they make a  
wise answer, out of that feeling which  
they had of the wonderfull works of the  
God of Israel. But what manner of an-  
swer I pray, and how vnusuall? how  
variable and how changeable are they  
in their counsailes? for but the day be-  
fore they gaue counsell to hang *Mardo-  
cham* on a gibbet, & yet they knew as wel  
then that *Mardocham* was a *hew* as now:  
for so *Haman* had described him vnto  
them in the Chapter last before, ver. 13.  
Why then did they not thinke so at that  
time as now? Forsooth they endeuou-  
red then to curry fauour with their friends,  
whose prosperitie dazeled their eyes:  
and whereas *Haman* sought for flatter-  
ers, it was meete that he should receiue  
hurtfull counsell at their hands. Now  
his friends are more quicksighted, the  
mist of false honour beeing removed  
from their eyes, and the vayne of feli-  
citie and flattering fortune (that I may  
speak) wherewith *Haman* was so de-  
lighted beeing taken away. So the  
wife



wise men of this world doe neuer give  
 sound counsell to those that are puffed  
 vp with the successe of their prosperitie  
 for their eyes wax dimme with that out-  
 ward blaze; but if aduersitie happen, then  
 the dimnesse being taken away, they are  
 cleere-eyed, and they speake the truth  
 more frankly. Behold how the dispo-  
 sitions of men are changed with the altera-  
 tion of their state! But yet notwithstanding  
 they are not as wise as they should  
 be for their friends good. For why doe  
 they not at the least perswade him to  
 throw downe the gibbet, the signe of his  
 pride, and their wicked counsell? Why  
 do they not mitigate his sorrowe with  
 comfortable words, to witte, that this  
 was but a suddaine motion of the king  
 and the honours bestowed on *Mardocheus*  
*chaire*, were but a courtly blast, which  
 would not continue long? Or why doe  
 they not rather warne him to flee vnto  
 the God of Israel, to crave pardon, and  
 to reconcile himselfe vnto *Mardocheus*?  
 The wicked though they see some  
 sparkle of the truth glittering, yet they  
 are bleared in their counsels, as Iob sayeth  
 God changeth the lip of the glapacke, and

Iob. 12.

20.

upon the booke of Ester. 133

away the iudgement of the iudgements.  
Besides, the enemies of the Church doe  
come with such force and furie to the de-  
struction of it, that they cannot take any  
good counsell: neither can they wade  
out of that depth, whereinto, labouring  
the ruine of the Church, they have plun-  
ged themselves. *Haman* could not call  
backe the decree made against the *Jewes*,  
neither could he honestly goe about it. *2. 2. 1*  
What is then to be done? Let him be  
condemned, and receive sentence of his de-  
struction, even by the mouth of his  
friends and familiars, which they do pro-  
nounce, not as doubting of the event, but  
as if they were beholding his fall with their  
eyes: for they say, *Thou shalt surely fall*  
*before him.* *2. 2. 2*  
They have reasons of great weight.  
*Thou hast begun already to fall. 2. 2. 3*  
*of the seed of the Jewes.* And these things  
they speake, that they may acknowledge  
the certaine hand of God in those things  
which happened; that so many things  
by *Mardocheus* favour and *Hamans* con-  
spiration did not meete together by chance  
but by Gods ruling and disposing all those  
things. For though the Heathen gave  
much



much vnto Fortune, yet often were they  
 driuen to Acknowledge the hand of  
 God. So the sorcerers among the *Egyp-  
 tians*, when they sawe the miracles of  
*Exod. 8. 19. Moses*, which they could not imitate,  
 they sayd, *This is the finger of God*. So the  
*Philistines*, when they caried about the  
 arke of God which they had taken cap-  
 tive, at the last being brought vnder  
 I. Sam. 6. plagues, were compelled to confesse that  
 those things came from the God of *Is-  
 rael*. So these men perceiue, that *Martin  
 chaus* could not obtaine so great honour  
 as *Haman* told of, in steed of that shame-  
 full death which they deuised for him  
 without Gods hand. But whence at the  
 last grew this opinion among them, that  
 he should perish, whosoever went about  
 any mischief against the *Jewes*? It may  
 be answered, that the wonderfull worke  
 of God which he had wrought in defend-  
 ing his people against their enemies  
 could not be vnknown vnto the nation  
 amongst whome the *Jewes* dwelt: and  
 especially that which as yet was fresh  
 in memorie, the band of their captiuitie  
 broke by the subuersion of the *Babylonian  
 Monarchie*: and that *Cyrus* the first *Ma-*

Arke of the *Persians* had sent home the *Jewes*, when by publike proclamation he had set the free, and bestowed vpon them great gifts and rewards. Moreover the *Amalekites*, of whom *Haman* was descended, could not be ignorant what slaughters they had sustained by the *Jewes*, and what sentence God had pronounced against them in his law, as before we haue shewed out of *Deuter. 25.* and *Exod. 17.* All these things then when as they might remember, they did the more boldly affirme that *Haman* should fall, seeing he had entred into enimitie with the *Jewes*.

Heerehence we are to obserue, that among the enemies of the Church, there are many, who whether they will or no, do acknowledge that God hath oftentimes stretched out his hand to the preservation of his Church, and is her most strong defence, and that at the last, their counsailes come to an euil end, who haue gone about to destroy her. But this feeling of theirs by euery light occasion is lost, and vanisheth, as the wicked are diuened in their diuers thoughts, sometimes one waye, sometimes another, like



like vnto those who are tossed with great  
 tempests vpon the sea. Yet notwithstanding,  
 facing the Lord sheweth himselfe sa-  
 plainly by defending their counsailes,  
 breaking their practises, and throwing  
 downe the heads and chiefe authors by  
 violent death, vnlesse they be altogether  
 Atheists, they are compelled at last to  
 confesse that the godly are preserved by  
 Gods mightie hand, whome the world  
 goeth about to overthrow. We ought to  
 take great comfort by this, and to apply  
 by a true faith vnto our selues, as well the  
 promises of God, as the admirable deli-  
 uerances of the Church, both in times  
 past, and in this present age. For how of-  
 ten hath he dissolved the most furious  
 practises of our enemies? By what means  
 did he breake in pieces that *Invincible*, as  
 they called it, and fearefull name and ar-  
 mie of the *Spaniards* against *England*?  
 How did he in *France* throw downe the  
 head of the *Leaguers*, and filled the ene-  
 mies of the Church with tumults and  
 confusion? Ought not we to be affected  
 with greater feeling of so wonderfull  
 works of God wrought for our deli-  
 uerance and safetie, then are the miserable  
 idolaters

idolaters, who are onely feared and a-  
 stonied with them. Let vs therefore as-  
 sure our selves that we are made the peo-  
 ple of God by the mercie of *Christ* *ie. Rom. 11. 17.*  
*scilicet* and grafted into the good *Olive tree*,  
 that we may be accounted the true chil-  
 dren of *Abraham*, and so all the promi-  
 ses made vnto the Church to belong  
 vnto vs. Therefore let vs certainly  
 knowe, that our aduersaries shall not  
 bring to passe their deuises and practi-  
 ces, but that the Church shall be vnto  
 them a *heauie stone*, all that lift it up shall  
 be *roued*, as *Zacharias* speaketh: finally,  
 that the firmenesse of the Church is in  
 heauen, and is conserued by him who  
 hath all power in heauen and in earth,  
 and who loueth her as the apple of his  
 eye. Wherefore neither the world, nor  
 Tyrants, nor Leaguers, nor the gates of  
 Hell, shall preuaile any thing against  
 her; but they shall all miserably perish,  
 and be overwhelmed with shame and  
 reproch as many as make warre against  
 her. Thus farre of the conclusion of  
 the first friends of the Church. In the  
 meanwhile the Kings Eunuchs  
 came, who basted to bring Haman in the  
 basket

*Zach. 12.*

3.

*Zach. 2. 8.*

*Mat. 16.*

18.

*Psal. 128. 5.*



banket that Ester had prepared. He would more willingly, I thinke, haue lamented his ill successe at home, rather then to haue hasted to the banket: for hee who is in sorrowe, is not greatly delighted with meate: and hee whose minde is sawced with bitternesse, taketh no pleasure in royall feasts. Howbeit, Haman fearing the Kings displeasure, dares not refuse. Hee might also suppose that it might make much to the covering of his disgrace, if he were so brought vnto *Esters* banket with the King. And peradventure also hee perswaded himselfe, that in this feast hee might take some occasion to hurt *Mardochaeus*. Hee goeth therefore, and is brought with honour together with the King vnto the banket, but carrieth his condemnation in his bosome. So it cometh to passe, that *not all that glistereth is golde*, as it is sayd in the prouerbe, and many tymes they are accounted most happie, who hide great sorrow in their hearts, and doe stand in fear of death and destruction hanging ouer their heads. Let vs not therefore enuie at the successe of the wicked, or

their prosperitie: for the wrath of God  
doth persecute them; and they cary  
theyr owne conscience as theyr exe-  
cutioner.

*Affueris* againe in this banker, pro-  
uoketh the Queene *Ester* to demand  
what she would, ratifying againe that  
promise, not to deny her any thing  
whatsoever, euen vnto the halfe of his  
kingdome. We haue spoken before of  
these ambitious promises of Princes, so  
that it needeth not to speake any more  
heere thereof: onely this is to be added,  
that God did so rule the kings tongue,  
that the Queene *Ester* might more con-  
fidently be bolde to propose her petiti-  
on vnto the King. Whereunto also that  
did much furder her, that *Mardachans*  
had such honor giuen him, and that  
*Haman* was so debased before him. So  
that there could not happen a more fit  
opportunitie vnto her, then this which  
God heere offered.

So is there an heauie issue prepared  
for *Haman*, that the table and banquet  
which for the most part haue ioy and  
delectation, be turned vnto him into a  
deadly snare: and that hapneth vnto him



banket that Ester had prepared. He would more willingly, I thinke, haue lamented his ill successe at home, rather then to haue hasted to the banket: for hee who is in sorrowe, is not greatly delighted with meate: and hee whose minde is sawced with bitterness, taketh no pleasure in royall feasts. Howbeit, Haman fearing the Kings displeasure, dares not refuse. Hee might also suppose that it might make much to the couering of his disgrace, if he were so brought vnto *Esters* banket with the King. And peraduenture also hee perswaded himselfe, that in this feast hee might take some occasion to hurt *Mardocheus*. Hee goeth therefore, and is brought with honour together with the King vnto the banket, but carrieth his condemnation in his bosome. So it cometh to passe, that not all that glistereth is golde, as it is sayd in the prouerbe: and many tymes they are accounted most happie, who hide great sorrowe in their hearts, and doo stand in feare of death and destruction hanging ouer their heads. Let vs not therefore enuie at the successe of the wicked, or at their

their prosperitie: for the wrath of God doth persecute them, and they cary theyr owne conscience as theyr executioner.

*Assuerus* againe in this banquet, pro-  
voketh the Queene *Ester* to demand  
what she would, ratifying againe that  
promise, not to deny her any thing  
whatsoever, even vnto the halfe of his  
kingdome. We haue spoken before of  
those ambitious promises of Princes, so  
that it needeth not to speake any more  
heere thereof: onely this is to be added,  
that God did so rule the kings tongue,  
that the Queene *Ester* might more con-  
fidently be bolde to propose her petiti-  
on vnto the King. Whereunto also that  
did much furder her, that *Mardachans*  
had such honor giuen him, and that  
*Haman* was so debased before him. So  
that there could not happen a more fit  
opportunitie vnto her, then this which  
God heere offered. *So* is there an heauie issue prepared  
for *Haman*, that the table and banquet  
which for the most part haue ioy and  
delectation, be turned vnto him into a  
deadly snare: and that hapneth vnto him



which Zephaniah speaketh in *Iob*, chap. 20.  
 vers. 23. When the wicked shall be about to  
 fill his belly, God shall send upon him his  
 fierce wrath, which he will rayne upon him  
 in steede of his meate. And surely it is  
*Rom. 8.28.* iust, that as all things worke for the best to  
 them that love God, so all things should  
 be turned to shame and dishonour to  
 those that hate God. Wherefore heere-  
 of let vs make this conclusion, that the  
 portion of the wicked is accursed, that  
 they shall faile of their purposes, and  
 loose their prosperitie, and that God be-  
 ing armed to overthrow and roote them  
 out, their destruction shall come in a mo-  
 ment, even in the middes of their ban-  
 quets and delights. Let vs therefore learne  
 to feare God, to put our confidence in  
 him, having this as most assured and pro-  
 ved, that nothing shall hurt vs if we fol-  
 low that which is right and honest, and  
 that our safetie and salvation shall be pur-  
 chased for by him, which he hath purchased  
 for vs by the blood of his Sonne our  
 Lord Iesus Christ, to whome be hono-  
 ur and glory for ever. Amen.

THE

# THE SEVENTEENE

## Sermon.

Ester frameth her accusation against Haman : and stirreth the King so against him, that he is also together astonished and amazed, in the foure next verses of the seventh Chapter.

3. Then Ester the Queene answered, and sayd: If I haue found fauour in thy sight, O King, and if it please the King, let my life be giuen me at my petition, and my people at my request.

4. For we are solde, I, and my people, to be destroyed, to be slaine and to perish: but if mee were solde for seruants, and for handmaydes, I would haue held my tongue: although the aduersarie could not recompence the Kings lasse.

5. Then king Assuerus answered, and sayd vnto the Queene Ester, Who is he, and where is he that presumeth to do thus?

6. And Ester sayd, the aduersarie and ene-



*mie is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afrayd before the King and the Queene.*

**T**He wise Salomon noting the profit that commeth of that wisdom which is of God, sayeth, that *Wisdom* *is better then strength; and then any weapons of warre.* For examples sake hee sayeth, *That there was a little Citie compassed by a great King, and that by the wisdom of one poore and wise man it was deliuered.* And to this belōgeth the historie of that wise woman, by whose wise speech, *Joab* *besieging the citie Abel, was appeased,* and the citizens perswaded to giue the head of seditious *Sheba* vnto *Joab*, and so the citie was deliuered by her. Neither thinke I it meet to overpasse in this place that which the Scripture deliuereth of *Abigail*, who by her wise oration made vnto *Dauid*, pacified his minde being moued against *Nabal*, and turned away the euill which he had threatned against *Nabal's* familie: and farther did so please him, that *Dauid* when her husband *Nabal* was dead, tooke her to his wife. And to this purpose also doth this example especially

especially, belong, which heere is proposed vnto vs, of the most wise petition of *Ester*, whereby she not only turned away the sword from her owne and her whole peoples throates, but so turned the Kings minde, that shee moued him to execute vengeance with deserved punishments, vpon *Haman* and his confederates, for their fierce crueltie and wickednes. And this example is heere proposed vnto vs, that in it wee may see what force the wisdom of the Saints hath, following as a guide the light of faith, and the feare of God: and by what force it scattereth the counsailes of the enemies, and procureth the fauour of the Kings of the earth.

Behold then heere the oration of *Ester*, short indeede, but full of grauitie and holy arte. *If I haue found fauour in thy sight, o King, and if it please the King, let my life bee giuen mee at my petition, and my people at my request.* Neither doth that great and excessiue promise of the kings, or that exceeding honor bestowed on *Mardocheus*, make her any thing the more insolent or proude, but that most modestly & most humbly



344 *The seventeenth Sermon*

shee layeth open her petition: for shee  
 more esteemeth of the greatnes of the  
 matter whereof she was to speake and  
 the maiestie of the king, then that leaue  
 which was granted her to speake freely.  
 Shee beginneth with the kings fauour  
 and good will, when she sayeth, *If I haue  
 found fauour, & if it please the King:* shew-  
 ing that in this petition she dependeth  
 as well on the kings good will and fauour,  
 as to trust to the equitie of the cause. Her  
 petition is simple, and not painted with  
 deceit, although it concerned great mat-  
 ters, her owne life, and her whole peoples.  
*Let my life,* sayth she, *be granted me at my  
 request, and my people at my petition.* She  
 desireth her life to be granted, that she  
 may shew, that she receiued a great gift  
 and reward of the kings liberalitie and  
 bountie, both for her self and her people,  
 if shee were deliuered from the present  
 danger that hanged ouer them. She ope-  
 nieth the cause of her most iust petition,  
 and the certaintie of the danger, in that  
 she addeth, *For we are solde, I, and my peo-  
 ple, to be destroyed, to be slayne, and to perish.*  
 She sayeth that they were solde, because  
 they were deliuered vnto death, and let

in open market as sheep vnto the slaughter. For although there were no bargain made of their sale, yet as those who sell any thing, deliuer it ouer to be vsed at the will and pleasure of him to whom it is solde: so also in that Edict which was set forth against the poore wretches, they were laide open to euery mans furie, as many as would kill, slay, or destroy them. And indeede she retaineth the very words of the decree, as wee heard them before, Chap. 3. vers. 13. that thereby she might more and more make knowne the equitie of the demaund. She might also haue respect vnto the offer made by *Haman* of the ten thousand talents of siluer, although the King accepted it not, thereby to note his malicious mind, who would not spare any cost to bring his bloudie purpose to passe. She adioyneth by way of yeelding, an argument of great modestie and humilitie. If, saith she, *Wee had bene solde for seruants and handmaidens, I would haue kept silence*: so that it had bin profitable and gainfull to the King, but he who goeth about to deliuer vs vnto death, is not profitable, but indammageth the King.



And this also she most simplie setteth  
 downe, for shee might boldly haue said,  
 What profit can there any way come vn-  
 to the king by such crueltie, and the blou-  
 dy slaughter of so many innocents, with-  
 out difference of men, women; olde,  
 yoong; high or low degree? But she tooke  
 diligent care, not to speake any thing that  
 might prick or trouble the kings minde,  
 „ who had consented vnto such a decree,  
 „ which might haue bene, if shee had made  
 „ any mention of crueltie, or had amplified  
 „ the hainousnesse of the decree.

But we must yet more exactly weigh  
 „ the vertues of *Ester*, which doo shine in  
 „ this Oration. For therein as in a Glasse,  
 „ do appeare her wisdom, faith, charitie,  
 „ humilitie and modestie, her vprightnesse  
 „ and integritie, ioyned with an holy bold-  
 „ nesse. Her wisdom is scene in all the  
 „ parts of her speech. For from the begin-  
 „ ning that she might procure the Kings  
 „ good will, she maketh no mention of her  
 „ dignitie, value, merit or worthinesse, for  
 „ kings do not willinglie heare those things  
 „ to bee spoken of by their subiects and in-  
 „ ferious, but shee speaketh onely of the  
 „ Kings fauour, of his good will and plea-  
 „ sure

sure onely, for which things Kings especially delight to be commended. It is wisdom, that in her petition she craveth not revenge of the iniurie offered vnto her, but saith that she will account it in lieu of a great benefite, if her life and the life of her people bee graunted her at her request.

How great wisdom also is there to be seene in these words, *Wee are sold, I, and my people, to bee destroyed, to bee slaine and to perish.* For in fewe words, both shee expresseth both the truth of the thing, and the barbarous crueltie of the fact, yet so, that shee toucheth not the King, whom shee passeth over vnnamed, although hee suffered that inhumane and bloudie Ediēt to passe. For though Kings erre and bee deceiued, yet they cannot abide to haue their errours in expresse words to be laid before them, or to bee reprooued. Shee doth not also name *Haman*, vntill shee had tryed the Kings affection towards her petition.

This also is wisely added by her, *That shee would haue helde her tongue, if they*



they had onely bene solde for slaves, so that it had bene profitable and gainesfull to the king. For Kings are greatly delighted with such humilitie, and liberall offer, that for their sake and profit, men auoyde no incommoditie. Besides, nothing could make more to procure hatred and enuie against *Haman*, though hee were not named, then when shee sayth that the enemy, who goeth about the death of so many, doeth not care for the Kings profit, but shall rather hinder and endamage him. And this is her wisdom.

Her faith is apparant, in that she saith, *Let my life, and the life of my people be granted me: And, I, and my people are solde.* For so shee confesseth, and in the midst of dangers, professeth that she is of the kindred of the Iewes, that shee embraceth their doctrine and religion, and that shee neither hath nor is willing to haue any thing separated or apart from the people of God, but that she would both liue and die together with them. Whereby it appeareth, that when by *Mardocheus* commandement she concealed her kindred and her people, it was not done for want

of faith or godlinesse, to dissemble her religion but of an holy wilddome, God so gouerning both her mind & tongue, that she might more conueniently helpe both her selfe and her people, in their greatest danger. And if at first by reason of feare there had bene any defect in faith, this confession is so plaine, and simple, that it taketh away all matter of excuse from those who in time of persecution forswear their religion, at what time they should more freely make confession thereof.

So *Nicodemus*, who when before hee was somewhat fearefull, and a secret Disciple of the Lord, did in the time of greatest danger make himselfe knowne, together with *Ioseph of Arimathea*, begging the body of our Lord Iesus Christ, and taking it downe from the Crosse, and laying it with honour into the Sepulchre. How great a shame is it then for those that glory in the name of Christians, so cowardly to forswear the Gospell for feare of losse of their goods?

*Iohn. 19.*

39.

The charitie of Ester consisteth in this, that she desired nothing for her selfe alone, but beareth a like care for her people



ple as for her self; and holdeth the church  
 of God more deare then her life. Easily  
 might she have obtained for her selfe by  
 name, whatsoeuer shee had demaunded  
 without any ones hatred or enuie, by  
 reason of that dignitie and state which  
 shee held with the King: but with the  
 same feruentnesse of mind doth she make  
 her supplication to the king, as well for  
 her people as for her owne life: which it  
 seemeth she should haue liued & prolon-  
 ged very sorrowfully, vntill the same at  
 her request had bene granted to her peo-  
 ple. Such ought our charitie to be, that we  
 should loue our neighbors as our selues,  
 so that they who are carefull for their  
 owne securitie and quietnes, little ca-  
 ring what becomes of others, are voyde of  
 charitie, and worse then Infidels: *holdeth*  
 Her modestie and humilitie appea-  
 reth in this, that she saith, *She would haue*  
*held her tongue,* if they had onely gone a-  
 bout to bring them into bondage and sla-  
 uerie, although shee and her people had  
 bin sold for the Kings profit and aduan-  
 tage: which maketh much to procure the  
 Kings goodwill, and to moue his minde  
 to mercie. *For*

For who is so stonie hearted, who would not be moued to heare so Noble a Lady so farr to abase her selfe, that shee would suffer herselfe to be solde, if it seemed good vnto the King, and might turne to his profit? Besides, it made to shew, with how great a terror of death shee was affected, refusing no condition though it were of most hard flauerie; so that shee might escape death.

It serued also very much to stirre vp more vehemently the kings pitie towards her, whom he had vouchsafed so great fauour, and bestowed the crowne royall vpon her afore all other, if hee should see her to stand in danger of her life, and so vehemently carefull for her safenie, that shee was ready to vndergo any flauerie to redeeme her life. Furthermore, her modestie is manifest by this, that shee doth not make her complaint more hainous by great butcries and exclamations, or importune desire of reuenge: but shee committeth the whole matter to the kings wil & good pleasure, esteeming of it as of a great gaine & benefite, to redeeme her life and the life of her people, from the crueltie of that Edict which was published against them.

Her



Her integritie and vprightnesse appea-  
 reth in this, that shee faueth or denieth  
 nothing, neither addeth any thing be-  
 sides the matter, to the commendation  
 thereof, or hatred of the enemies of the  
 people: neither doth shee fauour vpon the  
 king with any flattering words, to excuse  
 his rashnesse: to wit, that the goodnesse  
 of his nature, and his vprightnesse in iu-  
 stice, would neuer haue suffered so great  
 euill: this it could not be, but that  
 those Letters were obtained by deceit, or  
 were forged; for his goodnesse and cle-  
 mencie would neuer haue consented to  
 so barbarous a fact: to conclude, shee im-  
 ueteth no flatterie, for the Saints of  
 God know not how to lie or flatter: Last  
 of all, her courage and constancie is won-  
 derously to be praised, that she dare com-  
 plaine on so mightie an enemy, so deare  
 and in fauour with the King; to accuse  
 him of such a crime to his face; and that  
 vnto the King without whose disgrace  
 and reproach it could not be done, when  
 as rashly he had consented vnto that mis-  
 chiefe, which *Hamor* wickedly had deuie-  
 sed.

Such is the boldnesse and strength of

the

the Saints, who to the defence of the Church, are more bold then Lyons, as Salomon speaketh.

Heere hence wee learne, that all our affaires must bee managed by reason, which must be accompanied with true faith; in which, charitie must rule, vnto which must be adioyned, modestie, integrity, vprightnesse & courage, in defending a good cause, that neither for feare or shame, we start from doing our dutie, if we desire to haue the issue of them happy. For where these vertues are wanting, either the truth is betrayed, or not wel defended, and a good cause is overthrowne by impudencie, or pride and rashnesse. But who doth at this day so gouerne his actions with reason, that he could be content to haue iudgement giuen of them with like integrity and modestie? Who is now of such constancie, that in the presence of Princes hee will manfully defend the cause of the distressed? Who is enflamed with so great an heate of charity, that he will take care of the life of another man, no lesse then of his owne? Who is of such courage, that he will constantly professe himselfe a member of



the Church, when he shall see it on euery side to be oppressed with slanders, and condemned to death. Truly you shall see few *Esters* at this day, who so faithfully and wisely, and with such successe will take vpon them the defence of the Church: but there want not on the contrarie many like in disposition to *Iezabel* and *Athalia*, by whome the furie of Kings shall be kindled to the hatred and destruction of the Church. Furthermore, if *Ester* did with so great reuerence, feare, and humilitie, speake vnto a mortall King, what shall wee thinke is our duetie to doo when wee come into the presence of the infinite and immeasurable maiestie of the King of Kings? Shall wee bring our owne merits as did that proude Pharisee? Or shall wee speake with hatred and contempt of our neighbours as hee did? Or shall wee proudly lift vp our heads vnto the skyes? Or shall it not rather become vs following that Publicane, to cast downe our countenance to the earth, and to throwe downe and prostrate our selues before God, with true feeling of our sinnes, and sorrow

*Luc: 18.*

for the same, praying most humbly vnto him for our selues, and the liues of our brethren? And thus farre of Ester.

Let vs now hearken vnto the Kings answere. *Who*, sayeth he, *is he? or where is he? that presumeth to do thus?* By these words hee sheweth that hee was moued not onely to graunt *Esters* petition, but also to take vengeance of him, who had conspired against the life of her and of her people: saying, that he must needes be a presumptuous, and bolde man, who dare attempt so great a wickednes. For who can practise any thing against the life of the Queene, and not touch and violate the maiestie of the King? He asketh therefore who he may be, and where hee is, that hee may punish him: as it is the duetie of Kings to pull downe those who extoll themselves contrarie to their duetie, as *Dauid* protesteth concerning himselfe, *That hee would not suffer him that had* *Psal. 101. 5.*  
*a proude looke and an high heart.* But who could tell better then the King, who it was who had inuented so ha-  
mous a fact, when hee himselfe not full  
two moneths before, had graunted vnto



*Haman* whatsoeuer hee desired for the destruction of the Iewes; had commaunded the Scribes to write the proclamation after *Hamans* direction; had given him his Ring to seale it; had sent his posts to carrie it with speed into euery Prouince: as before in the third Chapter hath bene declared? Had he forgotten so great a matter of weight so suddenly? Or if he did remember it, why doth hee dissemble it? It may bee said, that the King did think that the Queene did speak of some other fact, & that as yet he knew that she was a Iew: or if hee remembered that fact, hee was ashamed of it: and, as Princes are wont to spare themselves, did lay the whole blame on another: or else that doubting hee would more truly vnderstand the whole matter whereof the Queene did complaine.

This is wont to happen vnto Kings that are not prouident in their affaires, and that doo almost all things without counsell, and at the pleasure of certaine Courtiers doo rashly gouerne and publish things of great moment, oftentimes being more carefull of the recompensing of some dutie scarce honest,

not, then of the life of many thousands.

It may be, that by reason of the multitude and varietie of affaires which Kings do manage, they forget some things: but what a negligence and blockishnesse was this, not beseeming him vnto whose defence and gouernment so many millions of men were committed to be safely preserved, to haue so little care of a decree made to the destruction of so many innocents of all ages, sexes, and estates, that so soone he had forgotten it?

Now *Ester* when shee perceiued by this answer, that the King was moued to take reuenge of him who was the author of so great a mischief to her and to her Nation, is bolde to name *Haman*, and set him forth with his deserued titles, *The aduersarie and enemy is this wicked Haman*. And this she speaketh as it were with her finger poynting at him, that hee should aunswere, if hee could take any exceptions to this accusation. She termeth him an aduersarie, because iniuriously and without cause hee had conspired against the Church, and had practised the destruction and vicer overthrow thereof.



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She calleth him an enemy, for that with deadly hatred he sought their blood by whome hee neuer was iniured. And though perhaps he did not purposely bend himselfe against the person of the Queene, concerning whome he might be ignorant that she was a *Jewe*, yet she accounteth him her aduersarie and enemy, because he hated the nation of the

*Jewes* the Church of God. So *David* sayd,

*Ps.* 139. 21.

22.

that Gods enemies were his enemies, whome he hated worse then a dog or toade. She sayeth he is a wicked one, and that deseruedly, for his false surmises, his crueltie against the Church, his blasphemies against God, his abuse of the Kings authoritie, and his extreme ambition, for which he went about to oppresse a quiet and innocent nation. These things at the first sight will seeme to be an iniurie, but it is lawfull in iudgement, to shew the wicked their faults, and to note their offences by name, and to reprove those

that are conuicted. So *Paul* called *Ananias*

*Act.* 23. 3.  
*Ier.* 22. 17.

a white wall: *Jeremy* said the *Ioiakim* did fauour of nothing but couetousnesse, and *Ezekiel* called *Sedechia* king of *Iudah* a wicked and polluted man: and *John* the

*Ezek.*

*Baptist*

Baptist termed the Pharises which came *Mat. 3. 7.*  
 to his baptisme, a generation of vipers.  
 Wherefore that which our Sauour Iesus  
 Christ doth warne, that he that saith vnto *Mat. 5. 22.*  
 his brother *Racha*, is werthie to be puni-  
 shed by the Councell: and whosoever  
 shal say foole, shal be worthie of hell fire:  
 is to be vnderstood of iniuries which are  
 done wittingly & maliciously by reproch  
 or contempt, or desire of priuate reuēge.  
 For otherwise the zeale of the glorie of  
 God, and the safetie of the Church, do re-  
 quire, that wicked mē be resisted, & their  
 hainous faults noted by their proper  
 names, whereby they may returne to a-  
 mendmēt; or els be made knowē, & puni-  
 shed for their wickednes and obstinacie.  
 Hereby also we learne what is the simple  
 and right manner of dealing in lawe be-  
 fore a Iudge, either ordinarie or extraor-  
 dinarie, euen such as this was, to weete,  
 that if it may be, it be done in the pro-  
 sence of the parties, and rather by word  
 then by writing, truely and simply, that  
 the good cause of the oppressed, and  
 the publique good and equitie be defen-  
 ded against the malice and false reports  
 of the wicked.



*Haman* thus accused, was astonished, neither had he any thing to alleadge against it, beeing convicted by his owne conscience, and the truth of *Esters* accusation, whereof the King himselfe was the best witnesse. So God is wont to stoppe the

*Pf. 63. 11.* mouths of the wicked, as *David* saith, that

& *3 I. 18.* when the wicked haue long delighted in

& *5. 10.* lying, at the last their mouth shall be stop-

& *10. 12. 18.* ped and they shall be dumbe : Neither

also doth hee pray in vaine that their

mouthes may be shut, & that God would

search out their wickednesse, that they

may be deceiued of their hope. On the

contrarie part, good men beeing accused

by false slanders and iniuriously, haue al-

wayes wherewith to defend themselues

both before God and man : who if they

happen to be oppressed by false acen-

sations and violence, as wee see *Naboth* con-

demned by false witnesses & stoned, and

*Zacharie* the Prophet commanded to be

stoned by *Ioua* : yet are they bolde vpon

the goodnesse of their conscience before

God, and the innocencie of their life be-

fore men ; God bringing foorth at last

their innocencie vnto light, and clearing

it from all false surmises and slanders.

Hence

*1. Ki. 22.*

*2. Chr. 24.*

Hence let vs learne patiently to expect,  
vntill God make inquirie, and search out  
the wickednes of the vngodly, and let  
them euey one in order before their *Psal. 50. 21.*  
eyes, as he hath threatned; in the meane  
while let vs giue our minds to truth and  
vprightnesse, and the iust defence of the  
faithfull: euey one according to his po-  
wer, condition and vocation, resisting the  
malice of the wicked enimies of the  
Church, that the godly being set at li-  
bertie from the hand of their enimies,  
God may be extolled by all, as well for  
his mercie as for his iudgements, for vn-  
to him belongeth all honor and glorie,  
in Christ Iesus his Sonne for euer. Amen.

## THE EIGHTEENE Sermon.

*The rest of the points of the accusation a-  
gainst Haman: his sentence, and the  
execution thereof, from the 7. verse,  
vnto the end of the 7. Chapter.*

*7. Then the King arose from the banquet of  
wine in his wrath, and went into the*



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palace garden, but Haman stoode up to make request for his life to the Queene Ester: for he sawe there was a mischiefe prepared for him of the King.

8. And when the King came againe out of the palace garden, into the house where they dranke wine, Haman was fallen vpon the bed whereon Ester sate: therefore the King sayed, Will hee force the Queene also before me in the house? As the word went out of the Kings mouth, they couered Hamans face.

9. And Harbona one of the Eunuches sayd in the presence of the King, Behold there standeth yet the tree in Hamans house fiftie cubits high, which Haman had prepared for Mordecai, that spake good for the King. Then the King sayd, Hang him thereon.

10. So they hanged Haman on the tree, that hee had prepared for Mordecai: then was the Kings wrath pacified.

**D**avid purposing to shew how short & brittle the felicitie of the wicked is, and how sodaine their destruction which they can neuer recover, doth thus speake, I haue seene the wicked strong, and  
 Ps/37.36. 37. sprea

spreading himselfe like a greene bay tree, yet  
 he passed away, and so he could not be found:  
 so that the very signes of his place did not  
 appeare: which thing Zophar in Iob doth Iob. 20. 4.  
 more plainly declare, when he sayeth: 5. 6. 7. 8.  
 Knowest thou not this of old? and since God 9.  
 placed man upon the earth, that the praise of  
 the wicked is short, and that the ioy of the hy-  
 pocrites is but a moment? Though his pride  
 mount up to the heauens, and his head touch  
 the cloudes, yet shall he perish for euer like  
 dung, and they which haue seene him shall  
 say, Where is hee? Hee shall flee away as a  
 dreame, and they shall not finde him; and  
 shall passe away as a vision of the night,  
 So that the eye which had seene him, shall  
 see him no more, neither shall his place  
 beholde him any more. These thinges  
 doo therefore thus happen, because, as  
 Dauid sayth, There is a God which ind- Psal. 58. 11.  
 geth the earth, who breaketh the teeth of 6. 7. 8.  
 these Lyons, and maketh that they passe a-  
 way as water, and melt as a snayle, and are  
 as the vntimely fruit of a woman which hath  
 not seene the Sunne.

All these thinges wee see to bee  
 most liuelye represented vnto vs in  
 this historie of the fall of Haman, who  
 in



in a moment doth fall downe headlong into extreme confusion and destruction, from that most high degree of honor, which in the *Persian* court he had obtained. We haue already heard how *Ester* had begun her accusation against him, and he held his peace, hauing nothing to except against it. It remaineth to see how the King proceeded in this cause, what faults he was farther charged withall, first by the King himselfe, vers. 8. next by *Harbonah* one of the Eunuches: verse 9. then his short sentence, and the sodaine execution thereof: that by all these we may learne to reuerence the Lord in his iudgements, to containe our selues in feare and trembling, not to be puffed vp with prosperitie, and patiently to expect vntill God bring forth his vengeance, and deliuer his Church from the force and tyrannie of those that oppresse it. The setting downe of this historie is simple, but the things that are contained therein are of great moment, which shall particularly be discussed.

First there is mention made of the Kings wrath, wherewith being chafed he riseth from the banquet, and goeth into the

the palace garden. This anger was vnto *Haman* a messenger of death: who maketh supplication vnto the *Queene Ester* for his life: perceiuing that euill was decreed by the king against him. His wrath was kindled with shame and indignation, as well because he had been deceiued by *Haman*, in that he had obtained of him so bloudie an edict against the *Iewes*: as also by the indignitie of the fact, that he had so abused his name and authoritie to trouble the *Queene*, and to bring her within the danger of her life. Therefore enflamed with anger, he ariseth and goeth into the palace garden with exceeding great indignation, not any longer abiding the sight of him by whome he had been deceiued to the granting of so vnhonest a fact. Neither doth he seeme to haue gone out into the garden to aswage, but rather to sharpen his rage, as by the event of his returne appeareth. But if he had well considered the matter, he should rather haue been angrie with himselfe, and accused his owne rashnes, then with *Haman*. For although his malice and crueltie was great, yet it had been of no force, vnlesse it had been streng-



strengthened by the Kings name and authoritie. But when Kings offend by euil counsaile, they lay all the blame vpon the wicked counsellours. And surely it is a iust vengeance against such naughtie counsellours, which ought to be an example vnto others, whereby they may learne not to be the authors of euil counsaile. Yet are not Kings therefore without blame, for that ouer-rashly they gaue credite vnto them, when as they might if they list, take sufficient deliberation of euery particular. The Kings wrath then was enflamed more and more against *Haman*, God so preparing for him his deserued punishment. If Kings be worthily angrie with those who leade them into error by deceite and shewe of reason, how much more iust is their wrath against those who by practises and conspiracies, by armes and threatnings, by open force against their maiestie and persons, go about to compell them, and as it were to make them the ministers of their priuate reuenge, and the seruants or rather bondslaues of their ambition?

In the meane while *Haman* maketh supplication to the Queene for his life, and

for griefe and sorrow falleth on the bed.  
 Loe, he who would needes be adored by  
*Mardocheus*, is compelled to lye downe  
 humbly at the feete of his cousin: he that  
 lately caryed his head aloft vnto the  
 skies, altogether swelling with arrogan-  
 cie, breathing out nothing els but threats  
 and death against the Church of God,  
 maketh petition for his owne life, be-  
 ing astonied with the gripes and sorrows  
 of death: and as it were hedged in on eve-  
 ry side with feares & trembling. And that  
 descruedly, he that lately had filled the  
 whole world with threatnings, terrors,  
 and teares, is now astonished and feareth,  
 standing as it were at the iudgement seate  
 of the King of feare, to be denoured by the  
 first borne of death, as it is said *Iob. 18. v. 13.*  
*14.* I confesse indeede that the faithfull  
 also are griped with great sorrowes and  
 feares, as *David* speaketh of himselfe, that *Psal. 18. 4.*  
*The sorrowes of death compassed him, that* & *55. 4. 5.*  
*feare and trembling came vpon him, and an*  
*horrible feare couered him*: but in time  
 they receiue comfort, & are deliuered fro  
 their feares. For as the causes of griefe  
 wherewith the godly are affected, are far  
 other then of the infidels, so likewise the  
 issues



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issues of both are very different: for only  
despaire followeth the one, and consolati-  
on as well in life as in death accompani-  
eth the other. *Haman* hoped that *Ester*  
would be more easily intreated to grant  
him his life then the King, whose wrath  
he knew to be violent, and not to be ap-  
peased: howbeit he found her as well as  
him not to be intreated, God so restrai-  
ning the *Queenes* affectiō, that he might  
exercise iudgement without mercie, on  
him who neuer vsed mercie. Adde here-  
unto, that *Ester* could not with a good  
conscience make intercession for him vn-  
to the king, and deliuer him from death,  
who with so great a crueltie had threat-  
ned the vtter destruction of the Church.  
For as *Salomon* excellently teacheth in  
the Prouerbs, *He that iustificeth the wic-*  
*ked, and condemneth the innocent, they both*  
*are an abomination vnto the Lord.* And  
without all doubt, they who are hardned  
in their mischiefe, can be tamed & made  
gentle by no good turnes. Hence  
sprang the Prouerbe, *Deliver a thiefe*  
*from the gallows, and he will hang thee*  
*thereon if he can.* Yea it is an vnmerci-  
full mercy to let a wolfe escape with his  
life,

*Pro. 17. 15.*

life, who can do nothing but hurt the sheepe. Wherefore by very good right, he who had wrought the death and destruction of the poore faithfull ones, who had appointed a shamefull death for *Mardocheus*, that same day, he himself is couered with shame, and hath no man to take pitie of him: as *David* prayeth and wisheth against the enemies of the Church, *Let there be none to extend mercy Psal. 109.*  
*unto him, when he is in miserie.* 12,

The king in the meane while returning out of the garden, and perceiuing *Haman* to be fallen downe vpon the bed whereon *Ester* sate, is reported to haue kindled with greater furie, and to say, *Will he force the Queene also before mee in the house?* The wretched man was fallen downe vpon the bed, whereon the Queene after the maner of that countrie sate at the beginning of the feast, being astonished with griefe: the king perswadeth himself, or faineth himselfe to beleue, that hee would offer violence vnto the Queene, that might haue the better shew of occasion to condemne him to death: although that those who are angrie, do faine any thing against those whome they hate,  
Bb                      though



though they be neuer so vnlikely, or contrary to the truth. *Haman* then is accused by the king as one that would haue violated the *Queenes* chastitie. And the word is to be noted which he vseth, *Will he also force?* as though he should say: Is it not enough for him that by his wiles he hath layd snares for the *Queenes* life, but that also he wil force her in the house before my face? And these things do make his fault the more hainous. So hee who with his false accusations did overwhelm euery man, and troubled the whole world, and filled all things with violence, he is himselfe oppressed with a false surmise, and is accused as a violater of chastitie. So wee see that fulfilled which the Sonne of God speaketh, *With what measure ye meate, it shall be measured vnto you againe.* So likewise that hapned vnto him which *David* wished vnto his enimies, *That their prayer should be turned into sinne,* and that the wicked should be condemned, without either hearing or enquirie of his cause; and that which is spoken in the 69. Psalm, vers. 27. *Lay iniquitie vpon their iniquitie, and heape vp sinne vpon their sinne.* And yet notwithstanding

*Mat. 7. 2.*

*Psal. 109. 7*

standing in this respect, ~~Asser~~ doth him iniurie; and anger hindereth him that he cannot in this case see the truth, so that he iudgeth otherwise of *Hamans* fact then he ought: for there was not any the least suspicion of this fact in respect of his present estate; neither was the *Queene* left alone without companie. But as our Lord and Saviour *Iesus Christ* said; that the bloud of all the iust even frō *Abel*, should come upon the murderers of *Ierusalem*, as though they had shed it, in as much as they hated the iust and all righteousness: So in respect of Gods iustice, it was right that this wicked man, who would, by overthrowing the Church, abolish all remembrance of God, should be accounted guiltie of any crime. For being as it were made of nought but sinne, they are readie for any mischiefe, if occasion only be offered vnto them, as the wicked is said to abhorre nothing that is euill.

*Mat. 23. 35*

*Psal. 36. 4*

As soone as the word came out of the kings mouth, they couered *Hamans* face, as one that was vnworthy the kings sight, or to enioy the vse of the light being coulted of such crimes. This was vnto him a messenger of death, & being aliue, he begā to feele the



darkenesse of death, euen as Zophar in *Iob* sayeth, chap. 20. vers. 26. *All darkenesse shall be hid in the secret places of the wicked, that his light shall be put out, and the sparkle of their fire shall no more giue light. Finally, that they shall be driuen out of the light into darkenesse, and be rooted out of the land of the liuing, as is sayd, chap. 18. vers. 18. And surely it is right that his face should be couered, that he may looke for nothing but for the darknesse of death; who would haue taken away the light of life from others. The Kings of the West are not wont to couer their faces whome they wil see no more, but command them presently to be caryed out of their presence.*

*Now heere steps forth one of the Eunuches Harbona, who fundereth the sentence against Haman. Behold, sayth he, the tree which Haman prepared for Mardocheus, who spake good for the king, standeth in Hamans house, fiftie cubits high. Haman is heere accused of foolish arrogancie, who of his owne priuate authoritie did set vp so high a gallowes; then of extreme crueltie, for that he would haue Mardocheus to be hanged thereon, an innocent man, and the Kings seruant; lastly,*

lastly, of vnthankfulnes and rash boldnes, desiring to lay on him a shamefull death, who had done a singular benefit for the king. *Harbona* may seeme heere to folow the maner of courtiers, who bend themselves with euery blast, as the king seemeth to fauour or dislike, and are friends in prosperitie, and in aduersitie enemies.

But it may also be, that *Harbonah* had before noted and disliked the pride & insolencie of *Haman*: and had also obserued the innocencie of *Mardocheus*: and therefore to shewe his affection towards his cause, doth accuse the pride and crueltie of *Haman*. Howsoeuer it were, it appeareth sufficiently that *Hama* did not couer his mind and purpose, and God by this meanes would haue his arrogancie disclosed. This is that which is spoken by *Zophar* in *Iob*,

The heauen shall declare the wickednes of the *Iob. 20. 27.*

ungodly, & the earth shall rise vp against him, *Iob. 15. 25.*

and euen as he hath lift up his hand against God, and made himself strong against the Almighty, so the hand of all should rise up against him. It is not therefore simply to be condemned, that those who stand in the presence of kings, should hauing occasion offered, admonish the, and help to further



their cause, whom they see to be oppressed by iniurie, and on the other side, detect their malice & arrogancie who oppress them, so that it be not done to flatter the Princes, and please their passions, but with a love of truth & equitie: which very seldome do possesse a place in the minds of Kings, or of the greater part of courtiers. But why touch I here this fault

*Psal. 12.2*

in courtiers, where as *David* saith, *Every man speaketh falsehood unto his neighbour, flattering with their lips, & speaking with a double heart.* We have then *Haman's* cause furnished on every side, partly with true accusation, partly with false. The king without stay, without counsaile pronounceth sentence, *Hang him thereon.* A short judgement: as the whole handling of the cause was short, so the sentence was shorter, pronounced in one word, without farther advise. For he who had wrested out so bloudie a decree, admitting none into counsaile, is worthy to be condemned to death without any counsaile. The sentence is just. For it was conuenient that he who had lifted vp himself against God, in seeking the destruction of his Church, should be lifted vp vpon an high gallows, that his

infamie

infamie might be manifest vnto all men. Besides it is iust that the wicked perish by their owne crafts; that wicked counsayle bring destruction vnto those that giue it; that they be taken in the nets that themselves laid; that they be entangled in their owne coards; fall into the pit which they digged; be consumed with the fire which they kindled, & to haue the mischiefe fall on their own heds which they had prepared for others: that God may be acknowledged to be iust, *when the wicked is snared in the worke of his own hands.* The king by this sentence sheweth his absolute power & rule, without law & measure, such as the *Turke* exerciseth at this day over his subjects, by his word & beck, appointing to death whomsoever they please; euen his owne children, without any iudgement. Which kinde of gouernment almost all the kings of the world do now challenge vnto them. The lawes of this realme and sentence of death are executed and determined by Iudges thereunto appointed, and by ordinarie course, and not immediately by the Prince. And this is iust, and most seemely, least that Princes in their rage abuse their authority, & hasten

*Psal. 9. 16.*



iudgement, wherein the life is called in question, which being once lost, can not be restored: for nothing is so sacred and inuiolable, which the lust and affection of wicked Princes doth not sometime prophane and violate.

The courtiers vnto whom that charge was committed, do speedily execute the sentence. Marke heere a wonderfull change, they who very lately adored *Haman*, draw him now to the gallowes: he who consented with him vnto the death of the *Jewes*, in fauour of the *Jewes* condemneth him to death. Such is the iustice of God, who putteth enimitie betweene the sworne enemies of truth and equitie, that one of them destroyeth another. Nay you shall not lightly see any who haue conspired together in wickednes, to remaine long at accord, but at the length one of them riseth against another, as it is sayd, that a fire went out of the  
*Jud. 9. 15.* *bramble and consumed the cedars of Lebanon.* So *Assuerus* who had consented vnto *Haman* for the death of the *Jewes*, and destruction of the Church, now bringeth him to a shamefull death: then which thing, what could be more strange and  
 unheard

vnheard of? He who caused that *Haman* of our time to be flaine, had consented with him to the butcherie of the french Churches, and by warre sought the ruine and destruction of the professors of the Gospell. Who will not heere wonder at the profound wisdom of the secrets of God? Who can choose but acknowledge his iustice? Who can but declare his wonderful works, and praise them exceedingly? Who would not cry out with *David*; *Psal. 92. 5.* O Lord how glorious are thy workes? how very deepe are thy thoughts? And *Psal. 36. 6.* Thy righteousness is like the mightie mountaines: thy iudgements are like the great deepe: thou Lord dost saue man and beast. What talke shall we thinke was then in *Susa*, what words of the faithful, but euen those which *David* setteth forth in this *Psal. 118.* manner: The voyce of ioy and deliuerance shall be in the tabernacles of the righteous, saying; The right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly; The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly. Worthily might they say, when they sawe that wicked man punished as he had deserved, that which is in the *Psal. 52. vers. 7.* Behold the man that

15.

16.



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tooke not God for his strength, but trusted in the multitude of his riches, and put his strength in his malice. For as it is sayd, Psal. 58. 10. The righteous shal reioyce when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the bloud of the wicked. Yea they might also say that which Debora sometimes sang in her song, So let all thine enemies perish, o Lord: And that which is, Psal. 129. 5. They that hate Sion shall be ashamed and turned backward. Yea and Mardocheus himselfe might rightly say with David: I will be glad and reioyce in thee: I will sing prayse to thy name, o thou most high: For that mine enemies are turned backe, fallen and perished at thy presence. For thou hast maintayned my right & my cause; Thou art set in thy throne, & indgest right: Thou hast rebuked the Hea-then; thou hast destroyed the wicked: thou hast put out their name eue for euer and euer. O thou enemy, are destructions come to a perpetuall end? Also Psalm 54. 6, 7. I will sacrifice willingly vnto thee: I will prayse thy Name, o Lord, because it is good. For God hath deliored me out of al trouble, and mine eye hath seene that which is right vpon mine enemies. And what on the contrarie part might they thinke who were ignorant of the

Jud. 5. 31.

Psal. 9. 2. 3.  
4. 5. 6.

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the

the wonderfull works of God? but euen  
that which is spoken, Psal. 64. 9. *All men  
shal see it, and declare the works of God, and  
they shall understand what he hath wrought.*  
For as Isai saith, *According as thy iudgemēt Isai. 26. 9.  
are in the earth, so the inhabitāts of the world  
shall learne righteousness.* So is that also ful-  
filled which is, Psal. 73. 19. *How suddenly  
are they destroyed, perished and horribly con-  
sumed?* Therefore they which enioy pro-  
speritie in this world, and those who are  
in fauour in the court, let them learne not  
to trust in those things: nothing is sooner  
defaced and decayeth, then fauour and  
dignitie in court: nothing is sooner blot-  
ted out, then the deceitfull shew of this  
world. But it may not without cause be  
demanded, whether the king did not of-  
fend and do amisse herein, seeing he was  
chafed both with wine & wrath: and pro-  
nounced iudgement so hastily without  
appeale, neither hearing the partie accu-  
sed, neither giuing him space to answere  
or to repent: finally no forme of iudge-  
ment being obserued. It may be answere-  
d to this question, that there are di-  
uers formes of iudgement, according to  
the varietie of time and place: and that  
which



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which at this time and vpon this occasion and circumstance is right and iustice, is not so at others: Besides that euen in the same countries, there are obserued diuers formes of iudgements, according to the diuers circumstances of time, fact, and persons. In warre there is an other forme of iudgement then in peace: an other when things are quiet, then in sedition: an other against traytours, and those who haue taken armes against the state, then against those who are the breakers of any priuate lawe. Moreouer, what neede we to be carefull to cleare the actions of an heathen and infidell king, when it chan- ceth many times that christian Princes do slip and erre in their iudgements? It is sufficient if heere we acknowledge Gods iustice, vsing what instruments pleaseth him, and euen by the hand of his enemies, furthering and effecting his worke, and al- wayes dealing most iustly in that thing, which oftentimes the instruments do not but with passion and iniustice. It is enough for vs to know that they are most worthy of death, which vse fraud and de- ceit, and abuse their fauour and authori- tie to the overthrowing of good & faith-  
full

all subiects; and the name, authoritie,  
scale and armes of Princes, onely to serue  
their owne reuenge, couetousnes, and  
ambition. By this example also let vs  
earne, that God doth not long leaue the  
open enemies of his Church unpunished,  
but that he taketh vengeance on them  
by some notable & horrible destruction.  
We haue the examples in the holy scrip-  
tures of three that were hanged, *Achito-  
phel* and *Iudas*, with their owne hands, and  
*Haman* by others, vpon that gallows  
which himself had prepared. *Pharao* was  
drowned in the middest of the red sea  
with his whole hoste: *Sisera* fell by the  
hand of a woman: *Sennacherib* was slaine  
by his owne sonnes: *Herode* who slewe  
*James*, was stricken by an Angell, and  
eaten with wormes. The Ecclesiasticall  
historie is full of such examples of the  
iudgements of God against the enemies  
of the truth of God, as it noteth *Nero* a-  
mongst the rest, who rayfed vp the first  
persecution; and who slew himselfe, was  
condemned by the *Romanes*, and drawen  
through the streetes of the citie. Our age  
poundeth with examples against those  
who haue persecuted the Church, as well

*Exod. 14.*

*Iud. 4.*

*2. King. 19.*

*Act. 12.*



in *France* and *Germanie*, as in *England* which it needeth not to follow in many words, seeing they are yet fresh in memorie. If any man, except that the who haue vndertaken the defence of the Church, haue also dyed of violent death I do indeede confesse it, which is also observed in the historie of the *Maccabees* that many holy men were flaine in the warre, or killed by the treason of the wicked enemies, but the diuersitie of the cause wherefore they dyed, as well the who set vpon the Church in hostile manner, as those who defended the Church doth make the death of both different for pretious before God is the death of those who spend their liues for the defence of the Church, as of *Abel*, and all the Martyrs since, though vnto the wicked world it seeme shamefull: but the death of the persecutors is abominable, though to the world it seeme pretious and to be lamented. In short, when as all men dye the death of one and other is not distinguished by any other meanes then by faith and a good conscience, which steeth only to the fauour of God, and defence of a good cause. Finally, it is to be obserued

observed, that these examples of Gods  
vengeance, against the enemies of his glo-  
rie and our saluation, are proposed vnto  
vs, that we should more and more be en-  
couraged vnto goodnes, be confirmed in  
true patience, and in expectation & loo-  
king for help at Gods hand, that we de-  
pend on his providence, that we restraine  
the murmurings and reasonings of flesh  
and bloud, that we learne more and more  
to despise the felicitie and pride of the  
wicked, confirme our minds against their  
threats, and be stirred so much the more  
vehemently vnto prayer. For if the pray-  
ers of his wife, did so moue a mortal king,  
when she made supplication for her life  
and the life of her people, much more  
will that great King of glorie heare the  
roanes of his Church, who is his wife,  
and arise vp in his wrath to deliuer her,  
and punish her enemies. Let vs therefore  
patiently comend our life into his hands,  
place our whole trust in him, and con-  
stantly looke for his help. For whatsoever  
shall happen vnto vs, he will saue vs in  
his heauenly kingdome, through Iesus  
Christ his Sonne our Lord, to whome be  
glorie for euer. *Amen.*

THE



# THE NINETEENTH Sermon.

*Hamans goods are given vnto Ester,  
and his honours vnto Mardocheus;  
Ester obtaineth letters from Assue-  
rus in fauour of the Iewes, the eight  
first verses of the eight Chapter.*

## CHAP. VIII.

1. *The same day did King Assuerus giue the  
house of Haman the aduersarie of the  
Iewes, vnto Ester, and Mordecai came  
before the King; for Ester told what he  
was vnto her.*
2. *And the King tooke off his ring, which he  
had taken from Haman, and gaue it vnto  
Mordecai: and Ester set Mordecai o-  
uer the house of Haman.*
3. *And Ester spake againe before the King,  
and fell downe at his feete weeping, and  
besought him that he would put away the  
wickednes of Haman the Agagite, and  
the deuise which he had imagined against  
the Iewes.*

4. And

upon the booke of Ester. 185

And the King held out the golden scepter toward Ester. Then arose Ester and stood before the King.

And sayd: If it please the King, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing be acceptable before the King, and I please him, let it be written, that the letters of the device of Haman the sonne of Hammedatha the Agagite, may be called againe, which wrote to destroy the Jewes, that are in all the kings provinces.

For how can I suffer and see the euill that shall come vnto my people? Or how can I suffer and see the destruction of my kindred?

And the King Astuerus sayd vnto the Queene Ester, and to Mordecai the Iewe, Behold, I haue giuen Ester the house of Haman, whome they haue hanged vpon the tree, because he would haue layd hand vpon the Jewes.

Write yee also for the Jewes as it liketh you, in the Kings name, and seale it with the Kings ring: but the writings which were written in the Kings name, and sealed with the Kings ring, may not be reuoked.

Ec

The



**T**He holy Scriptures doo represent  
 God vnto vs after two manners: on  
 the one side gentle and easie to be intrea-  
 ted, full of grace, fauour and mercie to-  
 wards those that feare him: on the other  
 side terrible and fearefull as a consuming  
*Psal. 50. 3.* fire to the wicked: as it is said, *A fire shall*  
*& 97.* deuoure before him, and that there shall go  
 a fire before him, and burne up his enemies  
 round about him: that we may know that  
 God though for a time he shew an angrie  
 countenance toward the faithfull, yet his  
 wrath is but for a short time, and contra-  
*Psal. 30. 6.* riuise his good will endureth to life: and if he  
 suffer the wicked to flourish & enioy pro-  
 speritie, it is but for a time, but his wrath  
 followeth them to destroy them for euer.  
*Psal. 92. 7.* as the wicked are said to growe up as the  
 grasse, and all the workers of iniquitie do flour-  
 ish, that they may perish for euer. Where-  
 fore the estate of both is thus describe  
*Psal. 34. 15.* by the Prophet, *The eyes of the Lord*  
*16.* *upon the iust, and his eares are open to heare*  
*their prayer. But the face of the Lord is*  
*gainst those that do euill, to cut off their remem-*  
*brance fro the earth.* This is heere propo-  
 sed vnto vs to behold in the three cha-  
 pters which remaine of this historie, be-

God did make euident his fauour & blessing vpon *Ester* and *Mardocheus*, and all the *Iewes*, who were but lately cōdemned vnto death: and again on the cōtrary part his wrath & curse vpon the goods & posteritie of *Haman*, and vpon all that consented with him to the destructiō of the Church. These things ought to comfort vs at all times, & to nourish our hope of the grace & fauour of God toward his people, & of his vengeance vpon his enemies, seeing he bringeth to shamefull death the authors of persecutions against his Church.

Now at this present we are to consider, how the Lord going on farder to powre out his vengeance against *Haman*, and to shew his fauour vnto *Ester* and *Mardocheus*, caused that these enioyed his substance & honors: in the two first verses of this chapter. Next, how *Ester* being moued with exceeding charitie & zeale towards the Church of God, obtained letters of *Assuerus* in fauour of the *Iewes*, that they might be safe from their enemies: Whereby we learne, with what feruentnes of minde, and vehemencie, the safetie and preservation of the Church is to be sought, which though the wicked



enemies be taken away, yet is she still in danger by their wicked practises and conspiracies.

First therefore we are to see to whome the spoyles of *Haman* came: to weet, his goods and possessions were given by the king to *Ester*, verſ. 1. and his honors to *Mardocheus*, verſ. 2. In that ſame day (ſaith the hiftorie) did the king *Aſuerus* give vnto *Eſter* the *Queene*, the houſe of *Haman* the aduerſarie of the *Iewes*. Vnder the name of houſe, is contained, all his ſtuffe and goods, both moueable and vnmoueable, which the ſame day that he was hanged were given by the king to *Eſter*, as being forfeited vnto the king, and ſo at his pleaſure to beſtow on whome ſoever it pleaſed him. The wife then of *Haman* we ſee and his children and friends are deceiued of their hope of ſucceſſion; and *Eſter* whome he held for his enemy, and would haue deſtroyed both her and her whole nation, is his heire, ſo that although the ſonnes of *Haman* ouerlived their father almoſt eight moneths before they were deſtroyed, as we ſhall ſee in the next chapter, yet they enioyed no part of their fathers goods. So the houſe

of the wicked, the goods of the oppressor of the Jewes, came into their hands who knew well to vse it: for Ester so whome they were giuen, set *Mardochaeus* to haue the ouersight of them, which he well and faithfully discharged, that so it might be fulfilled which *Salomon* spake, That the

goods of the wicked are gathered for the poore. And that which he sayeth in another place, The riches of the sinner are layd

up for the iust. Which is spoken yet more expressely in *Iob*, Though he should heape

up siluer as the dust, and prepare rayment as the clay, He may prepare it, but the iust shall

put it on, and the innocent shall divide the siluer. Whereby it appeareth, that that tes-

timonic of *David* is true, That men dis-

quiet themselves in vaine, heaping up riches, and can not tell who shall gather them. As

he also speaketh in another *Psalme*, Wee see that wise men dye, and also the ignorant

and foolish, and leave their riches for others. And (which is another vanitie of theirs,)

they thinke that their houses shall stand for ever, and their habitation from generation to

generation, & call their lands by their names. But this man shall not continue in honor, he

like the beasts that die. Hereby then it is

*Prou. 28. 8.*  
& *13. 22.*

*Iob. 27. 16.*  
*17.*

*Psal. 39. 6.*  
& *49. 10.*

*verse 11.*



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sufficiently tried, that none doo sooner  
 misse of their hope, then the proud which  
 make warre against God; for both their  
 goods come vnto others, and their me-  
 morie is either vtterly extinguished, or  
 remaineth detestable amongst good men  
 for euer: as we see *Haman* is noted by none  
 other title but the oppressor of the Iewes,  
 that is, of the true Church: and his goods  
 are worthily confiscate, as guiltie of trea-  
 son both against God and his Princesse.  
 For by his wicked deuises he did rise a-  
 gainst God, defamed the King, & sought  
 the life of the Queene. Heerehence ap-  
 peareth, that the law of the confiscation  
 of goods is most aunciēt, and vsed against  
 those who were guiltie of most hainous  
 crimes, that so the pride of men might be  
 beaten downe. For there is no ma so wic-  
 ked and vngodly, but he is touched with  
 care of his children and posteritie. In so  
 much, that many are not so afraid of death  
 as that their children by their fault should  
 be driuen to penurie. Therefore to re-  
 straine & bridle the malice of men, there  
 are not onely appointed most grieuous  
 paines for the more hainous offences, but  
 also the losse & confiscatiō of their goods.  
 But if any shall except that the childre

are not guiltie of the fathers offences, I say, that there is no greater iniurie done vnto them, though they be innocent, whē they are deprived of their fathers substance, then when they are deprived of their life & defence. The confiscation then, & taking away of *Haman's* goods, was a iust vengeance vpon him & his familie. I confesse that diuers times it may come to passe, that the best, by the false accusations of the wicked, may be spoiled of their life and goods, which we see was done vnto *Naboth* by the malice of *Iezabel*, who caused 1. King. 21. him to be accused of treason, that so *Achab* might challenge his goods & possession by way of confiscation: but the wicked do not long enioy those goods, as neither *Achab* had long cause of ioy, whē shortly after the death of *Naboth*, he receiued a message by *Eliab* the Prophet, of Gods vengeance, to be executed vpon him & his familie, together with a most notable testimonie of *Naboth's* innocencie: as the same historie doth witnesse. So that those who enioy the goods of the poore faithfull condemned for the profession of the Gospel, by escheate and confiscation, shal not long reioice, but shal shortly feeble the curse of God vpon theselues & their posteritie.



As touching *Ester*, she might with a good conscience possesse the goods of *Haman*, who suffered iustly for his deserts. And if we shall say that the Jewes did afterward abstaine from the spoiles of those whom in their lawfull defence they slewe, although the king gaue them the spoiles, and that therefore likewise *Ester* ought to haue abstained from the spoiles of *Haman*: we may aunswere, that the circumstances in these actions were diuers, and the manner of dealing therein diuers. Adde moreover, that some may for certaine respects renounce their right: and others with a good conscience vse it, that God both in the ones abstaining and the others vsing may be glorified. For the iustice of God is so much the more famous against a most deadly enemy of the Church, when as his goods are possessed by *Ester*; and the equitie of the Jewes cause is so much the more apparant, that being content to put away the force of their enemies, & danger wherein they were, they do abstaine from the spoile. Heere is to be learned, that those who enioy goods giue them by Princes, must wisely foresee what shall be conue-

nient and lawfull for them to do, and what be the circumstances of the fact. And thus farre of the forfeiture of Hamans goods.

Now his honors and dignities *Mardocheus* obtained, who came into the kings presence when *Ester* had tolde what he was unto her, and when the king had taken off his ring which he had taken from *Haman*, and had giuen it unto *Mardocheus*, *Mardocheus* had alreadie receiued great honor, for that benefit which he had done for the king, and his faithfull seruice towards him, when he was led by *Haman* through the streetes of the citie, vpon the kings horse, and in the kings apparell: but that honor was but short: now he receiueth firme and stable dignitie, so that he possesseth the chiefe degree of honor with the king: as *Salomon* saith, *When the wicked perish, the iust are multiplied, who lay hid whiles the wicked raigned.* These things also help him to obtaine these honors, that besides his faithfulness alreadie knowen vnto the King, the Queene *Ester* shewed the King what he was vnto her, to wect, her cosen germane, who had brought her vp, and been vnto her in steed of a father.



Wherefore the King who loued the  
 Queene entirely, did therefore loue *Mardo-  
 cheus* so much the more. Hereby weo  
 perceiue, partly the wisdom of *Mardo-  
 cheus*, who hitherto had willed his kinf-  
 woman to conceale her kindred and her  
 Nation, partly the silence and discretion  
 of *Ester*, in keeping secret that which she  
 was bidden. Notwithstanding, the Kings  
 carelesnesse is wonderfull in this poynt,  
 that in foure or five yeares space hee en-  
 quireth not, what an one, or whence she  
 was, whom he had chosen for his wife,  
 and did so esteeme of her, that preferring  
 her before all the rest, hee bestowed on  
 „ her the Crowne royall. But because shee  
 „ was brought into the kings house among  
 „ the damfels of the Citie of *Susa*, & dwelt  
 „ in the Citie, it is likely she was accounted  
 „ the daughter of some native Citizen, e-  
 „ specially when her father and mother be-  
 „ ing dead, the cōtrary did not appeare. But  
 whatsoeuer was done or supposed herein,  
 the admirable prouidence of God shi-  
 neth in it, who in fit time doth make  
 known the vertue and state of his, that he  
 may preferre them to high dignitie, so  
 farre as is expedient for the good of the  
 Church.

Church. The Kings Ring taken from *Haman* and given vnto *Mardocheus*, doth note the chiefe degree of honour with the King, of which *Haman* was worthily depriv'd, and *Mardocheus* made possessor.

The King therefore acknowledging his error in chusing *Haman*, is now more wise in the choise of an other, whose fidelitie towards the King, wisdom and modestie in government, constancie in aduersitie, and moderation in honour, were sufficiently before hand tryed.

This is a great benefit when kings haue beene deceiued, whether by their willes and rash affections, or by the deceits and crafts of those whom they haue preferred, that yet at the last, they bethink theselues to appoynt men for government, whose faithfulness & vertue is sufficiently known and tryed. And here in *Haman*, is that fulfilled which is spoken, Psal. 49. vers. 17. *That euery one whē he dieth shal take nothing with him, neither shall his pomp descend after him.* And likewise that which *David* wisheth against the enemies of the Church, *That their daies be fewe, and an other take their office.* Ps. 109. 8.



*Isai. 22. 20.* So *Eliakim* a faithfull man and diligent, succeedeth *Shebna* an hypocrite, the steward of the house of *Hezekiah* : And *Act. 1. 26* *Matthias* the faithfull, in the roome of *Judas* the traytour. For although when they dye they cary not with them their goods or their honors, or their estates & callings: yet those who vse them well, cary this praise with the, that they haue faithfully discharged their duerie, and do retaine with honor the titles of that dignitie which they had attained : So when *Moses* or *Isaiah* are remembred, they are alwaies named the Prophets and faithful seruants of God : but the memorie of *Achitophel* & *Judas* is alwaies with reproch, and they are only called traytors. Wherefore the honor of good men doth as it were rest with them in their sepulchres, and yet flyeth through the whole world in the mouthes of men : but the name of the wicked perish for euer, and those dignities which they haue abused wickedly, are as it were by violence taken from them with euerglasting shame. *Mardocheus* accepteth willingly the honor which is offered him by the king : neither did hee thinke it vnlawfull to beare office in the court

court of an infidell king, and to manage the kings chiefest businesse. The same did *Ioseph* in *Egypt*, and *Daniel* in *Babylon*. Wherehence it is apparant, that it is lawfull for a faithfull man to beare any office in the courts of kings though infidels, so that he be not thereby compelled to do any thing against his consciēce. Fardermore, the Lord to shew that kingdoms are gouerned by him, and distributed according to his good pleasure, oftentimes by this meanes doth promote his seruants for the profit and commoditie of his Church, as in *Ioseph*, and *Daniel*, and heere in *Mardocheus* and *Ester* is euident. So *Constantine* the great was promoted to the Empire, that hee might bridle the persecutors of the Church, who had three hundred yeeres together raged against it, and repress the pride of *Licinius* his companion in the Empire, who euen then oppressed the Christians. In our time God hath raysted vp some good Kings and Princes, who by armes and lawfull power haue defended the truth, and protected the Church frō the violence of tyrants, vnto whome also the Lord hath giuen their dignities, who  
did



did abuse them to the oppressing of the  
 faithfull. Behold how in a moment the  
 Lord changeth the state of this world,  
 casting downe the proude and haughtie,  
*Lue. I. 51.* and contrariwise, lifting vp the abiect and  
 52. humble: as the blessed Virgine doth sing  
 in her Canticle. And this may suffice to  
 be spoken cōcerning *Haman*: being spoil-  
 ed of his goods, and *Ester* and *Mardoche-*  
*us* enriched with them.

Let vs now see with what care, and  
 with what minde *Ester* endeouored and  
 laboured that her people might be deli-  
 uered from that danger which hanged o-  
 uer them. For the kings commandment  
 set forth by *Haman*, though the author  
 thereof were dead, yet retained still his  
 force. *Ester* therefore being glad with the  
 prosperous successe of her former petiti-  
 on, proceedeth to speak vnto the King, and  
 falling downe at his feet weeping, besought  
 him that he would turne away the wickednes  
 of *Haman* the *Agagite*, and the deuice which  
 he had imagined against the *Iewes*. Although  
 then she had gained much, the chiefe e-  
 nemie of her people beeing dead, his  
 goodes beeing confiscate and shee  
 enioying them, as *Mardocheus* also his  
 honors

honors: yet she thinketh shee hath done nothing, vnlesse shee deliuer her people from the present daunger.

Now because shee perceiued that it was a hard matter to desire the calling backe of the decree, which by the law of the Persians was irreuocable, she entreateth him with greater affection and humilitie, falling down weeping at the kings feete, that so shee might the more easily mooue his minde. For how, I pray, could he be more moued to pittie and commiseration on so many innocent soules, then by the teares, carefulnesse, and sorrow of his most dearely beloued wife? Now *Ester* casteth al the blame vpon *Haman*, because he was the mouer, perswader, & promoter of this mischief against the Iewes, whome by false slaunders hee had oppressed: and wisely shee omitteth the mention of the King, though by his authoritie hee had confirmed the deuice: For the King had sufficiently witnessed, how greatly the matter displeased him. Besides when shee desireth, that the deuice of *Haman* should be reuoked, she couertly meaneth, that



that as by his authoritie the proclamation was approved, so also by his commandment, the euill effect thereof ought to be turned away from the necks of those miserable wretches, on whome it was like to light.

The King being moued with the presence of *Ester*, holdeth out vnto her the golden scepter, the signe of his fauour and good wil, whereby the *Queene* being the more confirmed, standing vp, doth speake the more boldly vnto the King. Her speech is like vnto that which we sawe in the former chapter, full of humilitie, wisdom, faith and zeale towards God, and feruent charitie towards her people. It is most seemely to speake vnto Kings with greatest humilitie, because of the dignitie and maiestie whereunto they are exalted, as those who are also adorned with the title of Gods euen by the Spirit of God, from whome they receiue so excellent an office. *Ester* therefore doth rightly debase and cast downe her selfe before the King when she speaketh vnto him, not remembering her own dignitie, nor desiring any thing but that which is right, and befitting the dignitie

*Psal. 82. 6.*

upon the booke of *Ester*.

tie of the King. And this indeede ought  
to be the end of all petitions, so that all  
flatterie be away, which is most hurtfull  
vnto kings, as was that of the *Tyrans* to  
*Herode Agrippa*, when they cryed, *The* *Act. 12. 22*  
*voyle of a God*, and not of a man: which whe  
he did not repress, it was the cause of  
his death. 23

The summe of her petition is, that she  
written, that the letters of *Manan* be reuoc-  
ked, which he wrote to destroy the *Jewes*,  
which are in all the kings prouinces. It is  
most rightfull to giue life vnto them  
whome we know to be wrongfully con-  
demned. But if any shall except that her  
petition was unlawfull and vnciuill, see-  
ing that by the lawes of the *Persians* all  
Proclamations were not to be called  
back againe: the answer is talie, that there  
is no place for any lawe of man, against e-  
quitie, and the lawes of God and nature.  
For is it iust, that because an etill lawe is  
receiued and in vse, therefore no man may  
make any petition vnto Princes for equi-  
tie, for truth, for the life and innocencie  
of good men? Heereby appeareth *Esters*  
holly boldnes: what then shall become of  
their sluggishnes & cowardise, who live in

De

those



those kingdomes, wherein edicts do waxe  
 blde. of themselves, and may every houre  
 be called back by contrary edicts, and yet  
 though they have authoritie, dare not  
 once open their mouths in the defence of  
 Gods Church? If Ester had sought excu-  
 ses & meates to hide her selfe, she would  
 have said, that she had done as much as  
 lay in her, *Haman* being hanged, & *Mar-  
 docheus* promoted into his place and dig-  
 nities; that it were a foolish, rash, and in-  
 considerate part to talke again to the king  
 in his furie, and that it was against the cu-  
 stome & lawes of the countrey to go about  
 to compell him to reuoke his comande-  
 ment; but she, because the matter concer-  
 neth the safetie of the Church, the glorie  
 of God, & the honor & estimation of the  
 king, is no whit afraid to craue that, which  
 otherwise might seeme to be vnciuill.  
 She sheweth also her zeale and charitie  
 in the reason which she bringeth in these  
 words, *How can I behold the euill, which  
 should come vpon my people, and how can I see  
 the destruction of my kindred?* for it is as much  
 as if she should say, that she had rather  
 lose her life, then with her eyes to behold  
 the destruction of her people & kindred.

and that nothing should be afterward more bitter vnto her then her life. And so very openly she witnesseth, that she desireth nothing more, esteemeth nothing more, then to be accounted amongst the people of God: neither is she ashamed to ioyne her selfe to that people whom condemned vnto death, euery one contemned: & this also made much to moue the king to seeke a remedie for this almost incurable mischiefe. The faith and charitie of this Queene is so much the more comendable, how much the rarer it is: seeing we shall find but a few at this day to be so inflamed with the zeale of the house of God. Let vs then at the least by her example, with humble prayers call vpo the King of heauen, that he will turne away from our brethren, the wicked counsailes and craftie practises of our enemies. For although the head of this League, & conspirators, the oppressor of the Church of God be destroyed, yet many remaine infected with this venime, and the fure of his craft and practises euen at this day euery where moueth warres, and filleth al places with seditions & most detestable apostasies. *Of Ester petition thus farre.*

*Psalmid* Dd 2 *The*



The answer of *Assuerus* is full of humanitie and gentlenes, and in granting the protection of the Iewes, easie & courteous: but yet it sheweth a troubled mind, when he sayeth, *That he had done what he might, having condemned Haman to the gallows, who would have layd his hand vpon the Iewes, and having giue his goods vnto Ester: and that he doth now moreover permit, that they write for the Iewes, as it shall seeme good vnto them: but yet he addeth, that the writing which was written in the Kings name, and sealed with the Kings seale, could not be called backe. Notwithstanding what could be done in fauour of the Iewes, but it would be contrarie to the former proclamation? Lo into what straights Princes are often brought by the fraude and malice of wicked counsellours: behold also how, seeing the weaknes of mens wit is so great, it is not expedient that all the constitutions of a kingdome should be irrenocable. For whē as the King dares not call back his former Proclamation, what doth he but lay open his people to the slaughter, by two contrarie writings, being both of like authority, arming his subjects one against another? And if God*  
*himselfe*

himselfe had not holpen the poore oppressed, it is most certaine, that the former proclamation would haue had the greater force. Heere then let vs rather admire Gods providence, then praise the Kings wisdom. These things are written for our comfort, that in our greatest dangers, and hardest distresse, when the mischief seemeth past remedie, we flee vnto him who made a way for his people through the midst of the sea: who lighteneth our most thickest darknes by the brightness of his light: who openeth the graues, who deliuereth vs out of the shadow of death, as heretofore he preserved by wonderfull meanes his people, and the three children cast into the fierie fornace, and finally *Daniel* in the very den of Lyons. Howbeit, the kings humanitie and courtesie is to be commended, who so willingly consented that they should write in fauour of the Iewes: but it is no maruell if he could not by his owne wisdom wind himselfe out of so intricate a busines, and therefore committed the whole matter to the fidelity and wisdom of *Mardocheus*. Heereby it is euident, that Princes neede nothing more then faithful counsellors. It is



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therefore our parts to obtaine them by our prayers for our Princes at the hand of the Lord; and to pray that God will direct their minds to follow the aduise of faithfull and good counsellors. For otherwise the Lord will finde out many wayes to punish the enemies of his name, and to deliuer his people out of all distresse, that they may giue him eternall prayse and immortall glorie; for vnto him belong onely all glorie and dominion, through Iesus Christ his Sonne our Lord. Amen.

**THE TWENTIETH**  
*Sermon.*

*What wisdom Mardocheus did vse in writing the Proclamation in fauour of the Iewes, in the great anguish and trouble of his mind, from verse 9. to 15. of the 3. Chapter.*

9. *Then were the Kings Scribes called at the same time, euen in the third moneth, that is, the moneth Sivan, on the xxij. day thereof; and it was written according*

unto all that Mordecai commanded, unto the Jewes, and to the Princes, and Captaines and rulers of the Prouinces, which were from India, euen unto Ethiopia, an hundred and seven and twentie prouinces, unto euery prouince according to the writing thereof, and to euery people after their speech, and to the Jewes according unto their writing, and according to their language.

10. And hee wrote in the King Assuerus name, and sealed it with the Kings ring: and he sent the letters by posts on horse-backe, and that roade on beasts of price, as dromedaries, and coltes of mares.

11. Wherein the King graunted the Jewes (in what citie soener they were) to gather themselves together and to stand for their life, and to roote out, to slay, and to destroy, all the power of the people, and of the prouince which shall inuade them, their children and women, and to spoile their goods.

12. Vpon the same day in all the prouinces of King Assuerus, euen the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth, which is the moneth Adar.

13. The copie of the writing was, how there



should be a commandement giue in all and every prouince, published among all the people, and that the Iewes should be readie against that day to auenge themselves on their enemies.

14. So the posts rode vpo beasts of price, and dromedaries, and wet forth with speede to execute the Kings commandement, and the decree was given at Susa the citie royall.

**A**braham the father of the faithfull, in the greatest troubles of his minde, when he was in the way going to sacrifice his only sonne, who demanded of him where was the lamb for the burnt offering, gaue this memorable answer full of faith, saying, *The Lord will provide.* For in the midst of distresses, which no wit of mā could haue remedied, he sheweth that he depēdeth altogether on Gods prouidence: and teacheth vs, that in all hard and doubtfull matters, we must do our dutie, and vse that wisdome which God giueth vs, least we be fearefull like the infidels, and leaue the euēts & doubts which we can not redresse, to Gods prouidence and most wise gouernment, who hath promised to be a light vnto vs in  
our

our most thickest darkenesse. This also we see to be performed by *Mardocheus*, in this Historie: for, the King granting him leave to write what letters he would in fauour of the Iewes, and yet not renouing the former which were written for their destruction, it is not to be doubted, but that he wrestled with many doubts & diuers feares; perceiving the Kings mind to be mutable and easily chaunged: and besides, foreseeing many daungers, after what manner soeuer he should write the decree. For, as wee heere see the Edict written, to graunt the Iewes, that being gathered together, they might stand for their life against all that would as enemies inuade them: was it not to set them open to a hard and most daungerous Combat, against the naturall subiects of the kingdome, armed no lesse with the Kings authoritie, then the Iewes, who were onely poore captiues and straungers, and farre lesse in number then their enemies? *Mardocheus* therefore in these straights, did what he could in dutie, and by the authoritie granted him from the king, remitting the whole euent of the matter vnto the mercie of the Lord, whose wonderful



meanes in deliuering of his Church, hee had alreadie had experience of, in that happie end of so many dangers, which the minde of man could not haue thought on: hoping that it would come to passe, that God who had begun the deliuerance of his Church by so sudden and vnhoped meanes, would perfect the same vnto his glorie. Here then we are to consider how *Mardocheus* did prouide, that this new proclamation might go forth absolute in all parts and forme, and what was the substance and argument thereof. Wherein shall be obserued his wisdom, equitie and diligence, in guiding and furthering the publike affaires of the Church; which are particularly to be vnfolded by vs, that in all things we may obserue the care and direction which God beareth over his: and how he disposeth all things for their safetie and commoditie, as oft as it seemeth good vnto him; and that so we may learne, to rest vpon his fatherly care, doing notwithstanding our dutie, as much as in vs lyeth.

The ninth verse, declareth the time wherein that proclamation was made in fauor of the Lewes: by whom, vnto whom, and

and how it was carried. The time, is the 23. day of the third moneth, which is called *Sivan*, which answereth to part of our *May*. Whereby it is apparant that this Edict went forth two moneths & ten daies after the other, which as we saw Chap. 3. vers. 12. was made the thirteenth day of the first moneth. Besides from the publishing of this Edict vnto the execution therof, there was eight months and about twentie dayes: For as in the next Chapter we shall see, it was fulfilled on the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth. The time is thus precisely noted, not onely for the certaintie and truth of the Historie: but also that the state of the Church may be set before our eyes, what it was at that time, first for the space of those two monethes and ten dayes, wherein it was halfe buried, as it were being condemned to death and destruction, which seemed impossible to be auoyded. After, how in the space of other eight moneths, beginning as it were to breathe againe, she prepared her self to her iust & lawfull defence: yet not without many difficulties, whereby she might be feared, vntil God gaue her a full victorie over her enemies.

**God**



God therefore will haue the estate of his Church to be such in this world, that she shal seem sometimes to be oppressed, without hope of restoring, sometimes armed with some iust defence, sometimes also to haue the vpper hand of her enemies: that so being tryed by all meanes, she may the better know her infirmitie, and the hatred wherewith shee is troubled by the world: and yet notwithstanding that she hath her whole defence resting in God alone by whom she is stayed vp, and who as oft as it seemeth good vnto him, turneth all things to her profit and commoditie. We see then, that the people of God was accounted as miserable and past hope, as well in the opinion of the wicked, as in their owne iudgement, hauing the sentence of death pronounced against them.

And this was not a little profitable vnto them, that they might the better be stirred vp vnto repentance, which in prosperitie is neglected: and that she might be made like vnto the sonne of God, who was consecrated by afflictions: and that the wonderfull power of God in deliuering his, might be the more knowne. For

if there were no oppression, where were  
deliuerance? vntlesse we were plunged  
in the darknesse of death, how shuld that  
light of life whereby God quickneth vs  
be knowne? God therefore being about  
to shew forth any notable deliuerance,  
and great worke of his glorie, first suffer-  
eth histo be drowned, & as it were shut  
vp in the graue, that in their safetie, his  
glorie may by some more excellent  
means shine most cleare, and the hand of  
god may beacknowledged in it, and that  
it may be said, *The Lord hath done it.* But  
he exerciseth his Church sometime more  
greciously, sometimes but lightly, and ei-  
ther lengtheneth or shortneth the time  
of calamitie, as hee seeth it expedi-  
ent, yeelding them strength and pa-  
tience, according to the measure of the  
time which hee hath prescribed vnto the  
affliction.

Afterward there is expressed by whom  
the decree is written, to wit, by *Mardo-  
chaeus*, who did endite the substance ther-  
of vnto the Scribes, who brought it into  
forme as he prescribed. Here then the  
king affordeth the same fauour vnto  
*Mardochaeus*, which before he did vnto  
*Haman*,



*Hanan*, permitting to his pleasure what-  
 soeuer was needfull to be done, so that he  
 were not compelled to recall in expresse  
 termes, the former proclamation. In  
 which thing, the King may worthily bee  
 said to haue dealt inconsiderately, to per-  
 mit that whole matter vnto one mans  
 will and pleasure, which ought to haue  
 beene done with great deliberation and  
 stayed counsell. For although in plaine  
 words the former decree was not reuo-  
 ked, yet of necessity this must be made  
 contrarie vnto it. But yet not without  
 the exceeding great wisdom of God, do  
 these things thus come to passe: for if  
 the counsellors had bene called together,  
 perhaps they would not haue consented,  
 to a decree so fauourable for the Iewes  
 so contrarie to the former, and so hurtfull  
 vnto the Kings naturall subiects. But so  
 much the greater was the care and trou-  
 ble of *Mardachaus*, because he alone must  
 sustaine the whole hatred and enuie of  
 that proclamation.

And it is not to bee doubted, but  
 that hee was greatly troubled, when hee  
 should endite that Edict vnto the scribes,  
 seeing that he was a man late raised to that

so great dignitie; in a place so slipperie,  
and in the guiding of matters of so great  
weight, even which concerned the whole  
state of so great a Monarchie; having al-  
so to do with a King so vnconstant, him-  
selfe besides, having in so fewe yeares bin  
the beholder of so many changes. How-  
beit God gaue him sufficient wisdom,  
as hee is wont to bestowe gifts necessarie  
vpon all whom he calleth to any lawfull  
vocation.

The Scribes are called, not to set  
downe their opinion, but to write as  
they were commanded. Wherefore  
they doo not admonish the King nei-  
ther of the repugnance of this Edict  
with the former, neither of the con-  
sequence which might fall out by it,  
neither of the dammage which should  
come to all the Kings subjects who  
should destroy themselves by ciuill mur-  
ther: whereby appeareth, that the kings  
authoritie was on all sides absolute,  
and that none durst gainsay him, or  
except any thing against his De-  
cree.

Such at this day is the authoritie of the  
Turk; but the better and more moderate  
Princes



Princes are wont for the most part to  
heare the opinion of their counsell, and  
seruants. Now these Scribes it seemeth  
cared not what they wrought, so that  
they were assured that it was the Kings  
will.

The proclamation is appointed to  
be sent to the Iewes, because it concer-  
ned their securitie: then vnto the Prin-  
ces, Captaines and chiefe Gouvernours of  
the Prouinces, that they should publish  
it, and least that they should hinder the  
Iewes in their iust defence; so that those  
who had receiued the former comādemēt  
fro the king, should now be certified of his  
contrarie pleasure. So we see that the king  
doth little esteeme what his Lieutenant  
and gouernors would iudge of so sudden  
a change, and so contrarie opinions and  
decrees. Whereby it appeareth what  
fearefull and absolute or rather immoderate  
dominion he exercised ouer his sub-  
iects. These think themselves to be gods,  
that may not be reprehended nor repro-  
ued, so that no man may so much as looke  
into their actions, much lesse gainsay  
them.

The manner of the writing of the  
pro-

Proclamation is diuers, according to the stile and language of euery province, that no man might pretend ignorance. But if the commandements of earthly kings ought to be written in all the tongues of their subiects, how much more the lawe of the eternall *Iehonah*, which none can be ignorant of without certaine losse of their saluation?

Of those to whome the letters are committed to be caryed into the seuen and twentie provinces, we shall speake more commodiously afterward, *vers. 14.* So that heere we are to weigh that which is sayd, *That they were written in the Kings name, and sealed with the Kings scale.* For so they were made authentick without contradiction. For as in these dayes Kings and Princes, are wont to seale their Patents with great seales, that they may adde force and authoritie to their graunts and commandements, that same were the kings of *Persia* wont to do with sealing with their ring. The King then sawe and allowed whatsoever the Scribes had written at the commandement of *Mardocherus*. So we see that it is most right that Kings heare and see those things which



are published in their name vnto their subiects, especially in things of great moment: for otherwise neither can they auoide the note of carelesnesse, and negligence, nor their counsellors of deceit and treason, if letters shall be sent out in the Kings name concerning the estate of the kingdome, which the King neither sawe, nor with sufficiēt deliberation did weigh and consider.

Let vs now then view their substance and argument, in these words; *That the King graunted vnto the Iewes (in what ciu soener they were) to gather together and to stand for their liues, and to roote out, and to slay, and to destroy all the power of the people and of the prouince which should invade them, their children and wiues: and to spoile their goods.* In these later words there is some ambiguitie and doubtfulness: for it is vncertaine whether the Iewes are permitted to kill, not only their enemies, but also their wiues and children: or onely to kill those who would oppresse them, their wiues and children? But this later sense doth better agree with the humanity of the faithfull, neither is it likely that *Mardocheus*, without Gods expresse

commandement, would haue women and children to be slaine. But some man will except: that the enemies of God and his Church are worthy to feele that punishment, which without cause they threatned vnto others. But there appeareth no such thing in the execution which shortly after did follow. So that to auoide all ambiguitie and doubtfulnes of speech, the Hebrue may be thus translated, *That it was graunted vnto the Iewes by the King, that they should slay all those that went about to lay violent hands on them, their wives or children: and that the spoiles of the enemies slayne was given by the King to the Iewes.* So that the summe of this Proclamation was, that it was graunted by the King vnto the Iewes, that they shoulde be gathered together to defend their liues, and to destroy all those that would offer them or theirs any force or violence, and besides to spoile their goods. So that they were not to set vpon any, but vsing their lawfull defence, to kill those that did lye in waite for their liues. And this is most rightfull, that being armed with the authoritie of the chiefe Magistrate, they might fight



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for their life, for their libertie and religion, for the defence of their wiues and children, and as the Prouerbe is, for their Temples & houses. For this cause warres are lawfull, whereby the inrodes and inuasions of enemies are repressed: in so much that they who take away from the faithfull the sword of lawfull defence as the *Anabaptists* do, do make a way for the wicked, and let loose the bridle to all manner of robberies: and do as it were lay open the innocent bound hand and foote to their furie: and besides condemne all the Saints: the faithfull seruants of God, *Abraham, Moses, Iosua, the Iudges, David,* and almost all the other good kings, who did leade the Lords hostes, and fought his battailes. In the meane while the former edict not being reuoked, doth still retaine his force, and so there arise heere great difficulties, so that it seemeth that there is small prouision made for the safetie of the Jewes. For who would hope that the naturall subiects of the king being more in number, and first strengthened with the Kings authoritie, could be overcome and defeated by the Jewes, being onely feeble captiues, dispersed here and there without

without armour, without authoritie.  
Besides is it not likely that the gouernours of the prouinces would either secretly or openly rather incline to their owne mens side then to the Iewes. Finally it being graunted that the Gouernours would incline to neither part, are not the naturall subiects rather stirred vp by this meanes against the Iewes, euen to thirst their blood, when as they were first armed by the Kings authoritie against them, and had more wayes to see vpon them then the other had to defend? Without doubt *Mardachians* did sufficiently perceiue these inconueniencies. But what could hee do? Only this procure that it may be lawfull for the Iewes to vse their iust defence, and hope that God would helpe their iust cause, as hee had alreadye begun to fauour and blesse his people, and that hee would send a feare vpon their enemies: which thing the King did confirme. Hee did also suppose, that when they should knowe the cause wherefore *Hamani* was hanged, and vnderstande whereupon this newe decree was graunted, and heare of the fauour which the Iewes



had with the King, as well in regard of  
*Ester* the Queene, as also for *Mordechaus*  
 sake, they would all flake that anger they  
 bare vnto the Lewes, and abstaine from  
 inuading them, seeing by that meanes  
 also themselves might be quiet. For as  
 the fauours and graces of Princes doe  
 leane either to this part or to the other,  
 so are the wills and affections of sub-  
 iects changed.

Hence also is to be obserued,  
 that Kings, howsoeuer they would  
 seeme to keepe their lawes holie and  
 inuiolate, yet by subtile and by-ways  
 they oftentimes overthrow them. The  
 King would by no meanes seeme willing  
 to depart from his former commande-  
 ment, which notwithstanding by this  
 contrarie decree, bee overturneth, and  
 in deede taketh away. Had he not dealt  
 better with his subjects, expressly to  
 haue reuoked that former decree, then  
 by this to set them thus together by  
 the eares. For this inuading on the one  
 part, and defence on the other, could  
 not be done without bloodshed on the  
 one side or the other, or both. But Gods  
 prouidence ruled and guided all these

things

things, that the enemies of the Church might receive the punishment they had deserved. Heere is also farther to be noted, that the wicked counsailes of the enemies of the Church, are made deadly both to themselves and their confederates. And although also after their death they leaue behinde them the effects of their treacheries and conspiracies, yet at the last they are all overturned, to the great confusion of those, who shall follow their most wicked counsailes.

Moreover, *Mardocheus* retaineth the very termes of the former edict to terrifie the enemies of the Church, when hee sayeth, that it is graunted to the Jewes to kill, slay, and destroy: whereby they might perceiue, that the mischief which they had prepared for others, should fall vpon their owne heads. And euen in this age, beyond all expectation, do we see the experience of all these things. For after the death of that *Haman* the head of the League, wee haue seene the force of former edicts repealed, and other proclamations sent out from the King against his companions and confederates, vnto whom notwithstanding



standing licence was before granted to destroy the godly. These are the admirable works of our God, which no man can sufficiently wonder at, and in meditation whereof all our senses will faile. For God doth fulfill those things before our eyes, which no man could expect, or so much as hope for.

There is a set day appointed for this matter throughout all the prouinces of the king *Assuerus*, to witte the xv. day of the xij. month, which is the month *Adar*, and which was appointed for the destruction of the Iewes: so that the day which was by *Hammans* malice prefixed for their ruine and overthrow, by the goodnes of God should be turned into safetie and deliuerance. Vntill that day came they might at leaue meete, and prepare and furnish themselves with things necessarie for their iust defence, diligently foreseeing as well the number of the enemies, as their purposes and strength whereby they prepared to set vpon them, or by what meanes they sought to hurt them. So it cometh to passe, that for the most part those times which the enemies of the Church did thinke to

be most fit to obtaine an happie issue of their deuises and practises, God doth appoint for their destruction: whereof wee oftentimes haue had experience. And thus farre of the dutie of the Iewes.

Let vs see what is commanded vnto the Gouernors: *That the copie of this writing should be published among the people, in every Province; and that the Iewes should be ready against that day to aduenge themselves on their enemies.* This might seem hard vnto the Lieutenants and Gouernors, who lately had published an Edict altogether contrarie vnto this. But they were in subjection such as seruants, vnto this great Monarch, neither dared they as much as to open their lips against his pleasure. But what I pray could they imagin, whe they saw such contrarie commandements, but that either the King was vnadcreete, or vsed euill counsellors, or else was delighted with the mutual hatreds and discords of his subjects, and would therefore make tryall which part was stronger. Notwithstanding they go on, and proclaime the Edict.

Whereby it cometh to passe, that



the Iewes are sufficiently furnished to be reuenged on their enemies. Although then private reuege be in expresse words forbidden. *Math. 5. 39.* Yet the publike granted by the Magistrate in a iust cause is alwaies lawfull, and commaunded by God.

*Pf. 18. 41.*

So *David* giueth thanks vnto God, that *hee* had given him power to auenge himselfe. It is likely that many contemned his decree, as being wrested from the King by the importunitie of a woman: and perswaded themselves, that the King indeede would not haue those things to be done, which were contained in that Edict, and that therfore they wold stand vnto the former.

But by this meanes God drew on his enemies vnto the day of slaughter. So diuers in our time trusting vnto that Edict, which was first made against the professors of the reformed religion, accounted of the Kings latter Edicts, but as trifles and to be laughed at. Which opinion yet was and will be to their hindrance.

Let vs now passe over vnto those by whose diligence those Letters were caried into

into all Prouinces, to wit, by the hand of swift postes, which rode on the best horses and beasts provided for the Kings affaires: for the Kings of *Persia* vsed to haue stage postes, prepared for the iournies of euery Prouince, that so in short time they might receiue newes of the whole affaires of the Kingdome, or send into the Prouinces as need required: of whose faithfulness no man would doubt seeing they had commaundement from the King.

So God provided, that his should speedily receiue the glad some tidings of theyr deliuerance, that in their anguish they might be comforted, and in their sorrowes cheared and made glad: and that by the effect it selfe he might approoue vnto them, that he had heard their prayers, and vnderstood their cries.

So when it seemeth good vnto the Lord, all things are chaunged, and turned vnto the good and ioy of the Church. For the Kings will and lips wish and speak whatsoeuer shall be for theyr profit: the Scribes write that which *Mardocheus* commaundeth them, who setteth downe that which he thinketh necessary



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necessarie for their preferuation: the  
Princes and Gouvernors they publish that  
which they are commaunded; the Posts  
speedily carie the Letters into all Prouin-  
ces: So God is wont to comfort his after  
afflictions. Let vs therefore wholly de-  
pend on him, serue him continually in  
feare, patiently expect his helpe, looking  
vntill he make vs ioyfull in Christ Iesus,  
by whom our ioy is purchased; to whom  
be glorie forever. Amen.

## THE ONE AND twentieth Sermon.

*The magnificence of Mardocheus, the  
ioy of all the Iewes, and the feare of all  
people. From the 15. verse to the end  
of the 8. Chapter.*

15. And Mordecai went out from the king  
in royall apparell of blew and white, and  
with a great Crowne of gold, and with a  
garment of fine linnen and purple, and the  
City of Sufa reioyced and was glad.

16. And vnto the Iewes was come light, and

ioy and gladnesse and honour.

17. Also in all and euery Province, and in all and euery Citie, into whatsoeuer place the Kings commandement and his decree came, there was ioy and gladnesse, a feast and good day, & many of the people of the land became Iewes: for the feare of the Iewes fell upon them.

**T**HERE is none of vs who doth not most willingly confesse, that the saying of Paul is most true, That God according to that power which worketh Eph. 3. 20. in vs, is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aske or thinke. For who knoweth not that Gods power doth infinitely surpasse the reach and desires of our minde? Howbeit when as the truth of this sentence is made open vnto vs by cleare and euident examples, or when as God by experience doth shew forth the same in our owne affaires, then with greater assurance and delight do we prooue it to be true, wherby we do powre out more abundantly the praises of God, proclaiming his power and bountie, which is far greater then all our wishes, desires, or demands.

There.



Therefore the holy Scripture doth set before our eyes many notable examples, in which the liberalitie and bountie of God doth infinitely passe our hope and petitions. This is cleare in *Ioseph*, being sold for a bondslaue into *Egypt*, and by the slaunders of his Mistresse cast into prison. For what more could he desire of God in this case then to be set free out of bondes into libertie, and restored to his fathers house. But God bestowed on him greater gifts, lifting him vp into the gouernment of all *Egypt*, and giuing him the next degree of honour vnto *Pharaoh*. The same fauour did *Daniel* feele in *Babylon*; for when as hee durst not hope  
*Gen. 39. 41* for any greater matter then to be set at libertie to returne vnto *Ierusalem*, hee was made the chiefe of all Princes by *Nabuchadnezzar*. The same heere is seene in *Mardocheus*, and the whole state of the *Iewes*, which were disperfed throughout all the Provinces of the kingdome of *Assyrius*. For whereas they could not thinke or wish for any greater matter, then to be deliuered fro death which by the decret of *Haman* did seeme to hang ouer theyr heads: yea were ready to change that  
 bloody

bloudy death for the most hard bondage,  
as we learned before out of *Esters* speech  
*Chap. 7. v. 4.* Behold now what God by  
an vn hoped meanes dooth make them to  
behold: to wit, the good will and excee-  
ding fauour of the King towards them;  
their enemie ouerthrowne, his goods gi-  
uen vnto *Ester*, and his honours bestow-  
ed on *Mardocheus*; an Edict proclaimed  
on their behalfe, the greatest part of the  
people fauouring them, their enemies  
fearing them: and finally as (God willing)  
in the next Chapter we shall see, a full vic-  
torie ouer their enemies, after which fol-  
lowed a publike ioy, and a solemne feast,  
the king allowing it. Is not this to do ex-  
ceeding abundantly, aboue all that we dare  
desire or think? And do not we at this day  
find the like, partly in respect of the chur-  
ches in *France*, partly in respect of those  
that defende the? The churches beginning  
to enioy some peace & tranquillitie, and  
the defenders of them attaining greater  
honour, then before they had, or durst  
to desire, the Pope in vaine thundring  
with his excommunications.

Besides the head and Captaine of the  
conspiracie being by so vnlooked & vnbo-  
ped



ped for meane flaine, and his other companions condemned of rebellion and treason? Who say, some few moneths before could haue hoped for or thought of these things? Therefore it is our dutie as well by those examples, which we see in others, as by those things the taste whereof by experience we find in our selues more and more to be confirmed in the hope of greater fauour and help from God, then in our thoughts we can attaine vnto. For the Lords hand is not shortned, neither is his goodnesse abated; but we must certainly assure our selues, that God will shew himselfe no lesse admirable in these daies then heretofore he hath done in the defence of his church. Wherefore let vs so learn to discusse those things which we haue in this Historie set forth vnto vs, that we apply them to our owne use and comfort.

First here is mention made of the honor and glorie of *Mardocheus*, then of the ioy and gladnesse of all the Iewes and lastly of the feare wherewith their enemies were affright. The glory of *Mardocheus* is commended by two things: the first is, his easie access vnto the King;

the other his gorgeous and precious apparell, for he is ſaid, to have come out from the preſence of the King in royall apparell of blue and white, and with a great Crowne of Gold. Such was their apparell whom the Kings of Perſia would honour, and unto whom they gave the chiefe places of dignitie about them, that they might governe the weightieſt affaires of the whole Kingdome.

For it is ſeemely that thoſe who are called by the King to the government of their State, ſhould be diſcerned by ſome notes, whereby their dignitie and maieſtie may be knowne, and authoritie procured unto them by that meanes: now by purple and fine linnen, and a golden Crowne, the higheſt dignitie which was next unto the Kings was noted. For great Princes will have certaine ſignes of greatneſſe and maieſtie to ſhine as it were in their chiefeſt officers, that theys glory may thereby appeare the greater: in as much as they can doe theſe things in thoſe whom it pleaſeth them to ad-  
vance.

So we ſee, that garments which at the firſt were provided onely for neceſſi-



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 ing were in the last sought for domineesse  
 and ornament, and for notes and distinc-  
 tions of dignitie. *Mardocheus* then did  
 not himselfe of his owne minde provide  
 this apparell, so to boast of his dignitie,  
 but admitted such as the King comman-  
 ded after the manner and custome of the  
 Persian Kings. Whereby it is apparant  
 that the faithfull may with a good con-  
 science vse all things that are meane and  
 indifferēt, so that they retaine godlinesse,  
 modestie, and charitie; not proudly lif-  
 ting up themselves against others, nor pam-  
 pering & delighting themselves in plea-  
 sures, neither abusing that fauor & autho-  
 ritie which they haue receiued. So *Daniel*  
 of whose holinesse no man doubteth, recei-  
 ued pretious ornaments, a chain of gold  
 and purple, when they were offered him  
 by the King of *Babylon*. Wherefore holi-  
 nesse, and rich ornaments of apparell, are  
 not contrarye one vnto another, neither  
 religion and the gouernment of publike  
 affaires; nor humilitie or modestie, and  
 high authoritie in those that vse it well.  
 For *Ioseph*, *Daniel* & *Mardocheus*, are ne-  
 uer a whit the lesse holy, for that they be  
 appareled in pretious garments; nor the  
 lesse

*Dan. 5. 19*

lesse religious, for that they gouerned the  
affaires of mightie Monarches: nor the  
lesse humble and modest, for that they at-  
tained to high honor. Nay on the contrary,  
pride many times lurketh vnder couer  
clothing, and often they who exercise hol-  
ly functions haue not the most godlinesse,  
and vnder the emptie shew of holinesse,  
hipocrisie and dissimulation lie hid-  
den.

Lo here how god can in a moment change  
the miserable condition of his seruants,  
into an happie and flourishing estate, that  
his power in this matter may be the more  
apparent. For the Holy Ghost doth not  
lay down these things vnto our view, that  
we should consider the gorgeous garmets  
of a mortall man, but that excellent change  
which his hand hath wrought. What then  
could *Adar dochaus* say, but that which *Da-  
uid* saith after he had prayed for the helpe  
of God to deliuer him? *Thou hast turned  
my mourning into joy, thou hast loosed my  
sack, and girded me with gladnesse. There-  
fore shall my tongue praise thee and not  
cease to stobbin the middle of the street.*  
Might he not also rightly say that of him-  
selfe, which is, *Ps. 31. 7. 8. I will be glad and*

Ps. 30. 11. 12



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grioyce in thy merrie: for thou hast knowne  
my trouble, thou hast seene my soule in ad-  
uersitie: and thou hast not shate me up in the  
hand of the enemy, but hast set my feet in a  
large roome. Neither doth that any  
lesse agree vnto him which the same Pro-  
phet saith, *Thou art a place to hide mee in,*  
*thou shalt keepe me from trouble by hand*  
*and compass me about with songs of deliue-*  
*rance.*

*Pf. 32. 7.*

So God for the most part is wont to  
dispose the affaires of his, that great ioy  
shall succeed great sorrow, & great glad-  
nesse follow after many teares; that great  
glory shall ensue after great disgrace, and  
after great abasing, high honor and mag-  
nificence, whereof the knowne examples  
of Ioh and David do make prooffe, as Da-  
uid himselfe doth acknowledge in these

*Pf. 71. 20.*

21.

*St. II. 20.*

*words, Thou hast caused me to see great*  
*troubles and aduersities, but thou wilt againe*  
*renew me, and take me up from the depth of*  
*the earth. Thou wilt increase mine honour,*  
*and returne and comfort me.* Ought not  
we then by these things to become more  
constant and bold in the midst of our  
dangers and greatest distresses? And thus  
saith of *Mardocheus* glorie.

The

The ioy and gladnesse of the Iewes, is next to be considered: and first of those who dwelt in *Susa*, and then of those who were dispersed in other Cities and Provinces, ver. 17. Of the Iewes which were abiding in *Susa*, it is said in the end of the 15. verse, that the naturall inhabitants reioyced for their sakes; vnto lesse we will follow a more simple sence of the place, and say, that *there was light and ioy in the Citie of Susa*; that is among the Iewes. But it may also be, that many of the Citizens of *Susa*, perceiving the kings fauour to the Iewes; the authoritie of Ester, and loue which the King bare to her; and the honour of *Mardocheus*, did giue forth some signes of reioycing for this felicitie of the Iewes; as for the most part wee see it to appen, that vnto what part the Kings fauour and affection doth bend, to the same also the good wil of the people doth incline. Many therefore being moued with so sudden and wonderfull changes, and seeing them reuiued whom before they thought dead, might well say with the Prophet, *Psal. 126. 2. The Lord hath done great things for them*. And so gratulate vnto them that deliuerance which



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the Lord had wrought for his Church.  
Wherefore it is rightly said, concerning  
the Jewes, whose this happinesse proper-  
ly was, *that there appeared unto them*  
*light, and gladnesse, and ioy, and glorie.* Light  
is set against the darknesse of affliction;  
gladnes against sorrow; ioy against tears;  
glorie against shame and abasing.

The fountaine of this gladnesse, was  
the light of the countenance of the Lord  
which did shine ouer them for their safe-  
tie. The matter was that happie change  
of their estate, their chiefe and most hate-  
full enemy being dead and destroyed,  
the king greatly fauouring them, the com-  
mandement sent forth in their behalfe  
*Ester and Mardocheus* being exalted into  
the highest dignitie and grace with the  
king: the ende of this ioy was the testifi-  
ing of a mind, not vnthankfull for so ma-  
ny benefites bestowed vpon them by  
God. It is lawfull then, nay it is expresse-  
ly commanded, that the faithfull reioyce  
be glad, when as they receiue the testi-  
monies of Gods fauour. Therefore is Da-  
uid wont most often when he would shew  
the greatnesse of his ioy, and his thank-  
full minde for the benefites which he had  
receiued

received from God, to invite and stirre *Ps. 103.*

vp all the workes of God, to praise God with him. Let vs not therefore suppose

that this was a prophane ioy, or the laughter of the children of this world, who delight themselves with all intemperancie

and tyot, but a true spirituall ioy proceeding from God, which had taken so deep

toote in their minds, that they did shewe forth the effects thereof in all the parts of

their body, and namely with their mouth, in so much that they braut forth into

Psalmes and praises of god, together with the faithfull in these words: Praised be the

Lord, our God which leadeth vs daily with *Ps. 68. 10.*

benefits: This is our God, even the God that saueth vs, and to the Lord God belong the issues of death. Likewise also the rest of the

Jewes which dwelt in euery Prouince are said to haue ioy and gladnesse, feastes and

mirth: for they did not keep any festiuall day vntil after the execution of the decrees

and destruction of their enemies, as afterwards we shall see.

Feastes agree with prosperitie; fasts with aduersities and calamities: but the

fasts of those which reioyce in the Lord, are seasoned with reuerence, & with thank

giuing.



.201.

giving, and adorned with the remembrance of the exceeding glorious workes of the Lord. For if the very *Ethiopes*, in whom there was any sparkes of honestie left, were wont in their feasts, to treat of graue and honest matters, and to tell of the false miracles of their Gods: what is seemely for Christians to do vnto whom so abundant an argument of praising god is offered, as wel in the former deliuerances of his church, as in these latter which daily we see to be performed? but some man will say, there is not yet so great an occasion offered vnto the Iewes of gladnesse, but that by reason of the dangers to ensue, there remaineth yet much more cause of feare and carefulnesse.

.01.88.19

.25

For the former Edict as yet being in force, and the Iewes having many enemies, who are as well armed with publike authoritie to inuade them, as they are for their owne defence, dooth there not seeme to be greater occasion of feare and dread, then of ioy and gladnesse? especially seeing the successe of warres is so diuers: and when as no part ouercommeth without great

.01.88.19

.25

.25

It is not to be thought that the Iewes did  
 so gine themselves to ioy, that they were  
 not carefull for their affaires, or did not  
 provide themselves against the day of ex-  
 ecutiō: and no doubt to this end did they  
 often call vpon God in their prayers. The  
 ioy then that was bred in their hearts for  
 this new benefit which they had receiued  
 from God, did likewise encourage them  
 to hope the more boldly for that which  
 was to come, because God being so ex-  
 cellent a workeman, is not wont to leaue  
 his worke imperfect, as *Psalm 138. 8.* it is said,  
*The goodnesse of the Lord endureth for ever,*  
*and that he neuer forsaketh the worke of his*  
*hands.* The Lord therefore doth so make  
 glad those that are his, that notwithstanding  
 he leaueth them sufficient occasion  
 to pray vnto him, and to looke carefully  
 vnto their affaires. And yet notwithstanding  
 leaving vnto them a certaine pledge  
 and earnest of full deliuerance, he giueth  
 them hope of happie successe, which yet  
 dependeth wholly vpon him: as also the  
 Prophet *Isa* speaketh, chap. 26. 12. *Thou O*  
*Lord wilt giue us peace, for thou also hast*  
*wrought all our worke for vs.*

That which is added in the end of this



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verse, mighte anable much to raise up the  
Iewes into a good hope, to wete, that  
many of the people of the land became Iewes;  
because the feare of the Iewes fell upon  
them. So that it came to passe, that on the  
one side many for desire tooke part with  
the Iewes; on the other side they were  
stricken with feare, who so euer went about  
to procure their death. That it is sayd  
that many of the people of the land were  
made Iewes, may thus be vnderstoode,  
that either they tooke part with them, or  
that they did embrace their Religion, ac-  
knowledging the God of the Iewes for  
the true God, who alone can saue and  
deliuer out of danger, those that put their  
whole trust and confidence in him. And  
this is one of the frutes which is gathered  
out of the works of God, and the won-  
derfull deliuerances of his Church, that  
many who before were ignorant, and de-  
spised or euen hated and persecuted the  
Church and her doctrine, when as they  
perceiue that God doth so mightily, be-  
yond all expectatio, deliuer his out of the  
lawes of their enemies, and not only out  
of their teeth, but euen almost out of the  
bottom of their belly, and bowels as it  
were,

were, whereinto they some quite to  
 haue swallowed them, then they take  
 part with the Church, and confesse that  
 this God only is to be worshipped & ser-  
 ued. So when God had by so many mi-  
 racles tamed and subdued *Pharao* and all  
*Egypt*, and after the last plague when his  
 people went out with an high and mightie  
 hand, a great multitude ioyned them-  
 selues to the *Israelites*, to goe together *Exo. 12. 38.*  
 with them out of *Egypt*. In the time of  
*Dauid*, when as he had obtained those  
 noble victories, many ioyned themselves  
 vnto him, some (as himselfe sayeth) for *Psal. 18.*  
 seruile feare, some willingly, and of their  
 owne accord. Many strangers also follo-  
 wed the people, returning out of the cap-  
 tinitie of *Babylon*, as it is said in *Ezra*, that *Ezra. 2. 59.*  
 some were put from the Priesthood be-  
 cause they knew not their genealogie. In  
 the Christian Church also, when as after  
 that *Lipinus* was overcome by *Constantine*, the persecutiōs of the Church ceased,  
 which had continued almost three hun-  
 dred yeeres together, an innumerable  
 company of people which before serued  
 idols, was content to be receiued into the  
 Church. So it cometh to passe, that those  
 miracu-



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miraculous deliverances of the people of God, are not onely profitable vnto themselves, but also turne to the saluation of many idolaters: so that the Church receiue a double benefit by this helpe from God, that is, both her protection and defence, and her increase also and multiplication: so that as *Isai* speaketh, chap. 49. vers. 21, *She marueileth whence so many children are borne vnto her, who was so long barren, and as it were a widow.* We are therefore to wish not the desolation and destruction of those that hate vs, and persecute vs of a false zeale, being bewitched by the false doctrine of the Papists; but rather their conuersion and saluation. And if any come into the Church, either by force, or for feare and in hypocrisie, in that also God is glorified, for that his enemies are forced to acknowledge his power, and confesse his maiestie, and yeeld some signe of obedience. Hence then did there arise vnto the Jewes good hope that many would stand on their part, and on the other side also they receiued great comfort, when they sawe that the feare of them fell vpon the people. For this feare was from God, who

who as oft as it seemeth good vnto him,  
taketh away courage from the mightie,  
and maketh them fall away like water,  
that either their weapons fall out of their  
hands, or be turned to their owne de-  
struction. And the holy Scripture often-  
times maketh mentio of this feare where-  
by God protected his, but terrified their  
enemies: as Gen. 35. 5. the feare of God is  
said to haue fallen on all the cities neere  
vnto Sichem, that they dared not follow  
after Jacob, whose sonnes Simeon & Levi,  
had spoiled the cite of Sichem, and flaine  
the inhabitants thereof. And Iosue, chap. 2.  
ver. 9. Rahab, which receiued the spies,  
amongst other things telleth this: I know  
that the Lord hath giuen you the land, for  
the feare of you is fallen vpon vs, and all the  
inhabitants of the land faile because of you.  
This faile God foretold vnto Moses  
should come to passe. Exod. 23. 27. I will  
put my feare before thee, and will destroy  
all the people among whom thou shalt goe,  
and I will make all thine enemies turne their  
backe vnto thee. This is that feare I say,  
whereby the enemies of the Church are  
restrained, wherby their hands are bound,  
their weapons fall out of their hands,  
and



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and they are made either much or fence.  
lesse.

Out of all this we learne, that a great  
part of the glory of the Church consisteth  
in her deliuerance, which God be-  
stoweth vpon her after aduersitie and  
calamitie: in which as in a furnace she is  
melted and purged, that being so tryed,  
she may come forth more pure out of the  
midst of the flame. The Church then by  
those things which she suffereth is made  
more famous, after that she is deliuered  
by God, then if she had alwayes conti-  
nued in one and the same state: yea  
Gods hand is made more knowen, and  
his deliuerance more glorious, by how  
much the greater the affliction was. Let  
vs not therefore beare grudgingly the  
length of afflictions, or despair in mind,  
though they be hard and violent, where-  
by also we are as it were thrust downe  
into the grane, and vnto the gates of  
death: for so much the more admirable  
shall our deliuerance be, how much the  
greater the danger was. For God doth  
it were throw vs downe into the dust,  
whome after he will lift up so much the  
higher: and risseth vs into the grane.

that in quickning vs, his force and power  
may be the more notable. So wee see  
David giue thanks vnto God, sometimes,  
that he had lifted him up from the gates of  
death: sometimes, that he had made him to  
ascend out of the graue: sometimes, that he  
had brought him out of the deep pit: some-  
times, that he had brought him out of the  
bowels of the earth. Let not vs therefore  
beare it impatiently, if we be as it were  
plunged into the graue, when as the  
Sonne of God remayned three dayes in  
it: being assuredly perswaded, that as Je-  
sus Christ our Lord, by rising againe did  
abolish the shame of the crosse, death,  
and sepulcher, and brought life and immor-  
talitie to light: so also it shall come to  
passe, that we by his power being quick-  
ned together with him after the laying  
downe of the shame of the crosse and  
death, shall be also made partakers of his  
glorie and immortalitie, that through  
him we may prayse God in the life eter-  
nall, to whome belongeth all honor and  
glorie for euermore. Amen.

THE



THE TWO AND  
twentieth Sermon

By what means the Jewes did execute  
that which was contained in the Pro-  
clamation made in their favour: from  
the first verse of the ninth Chapter  
unto the 11.

CHAP. IX.

1. So on the twelfth moneth, which is the  
moneth Adar, upon the thirteenth day of  
the same, when it arowe neere that the  
Kings commandement and his decrees  
should be put in execution, in the day that  
the enemies of the Jewes hoped to have  
power over them (but it turned contrarie  
for the Jewes had rule over them that be-  
trayed them,

2. The Jewes gathered themselves together  
in their cities throughout all the provinces  
of the King Alluerus, to lay hand on such  
as sought their hurt, and no man could  
withstand them: for the feare of them spread  
upon all people.

upon the booke of Ester.

3. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the Princes and the Captaines, and the officers of the King, exalted the Jewes; for the feare of Mordecai fell upon them.

4. For Mordecai was great in the Kings house, and the report of him went through all the provinces; for this men Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

5. Thus the Jewes smote all their enemies with strokes of the sword and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

6. And at Susa the citie royall slew the Jewes, and destroyed five hundred men.

And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

And Boratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha;

And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha

7. The tenne sonnes of Haman, the same of Amedatha, the adversary of the Jewes, slew they: but they layed not their hands upon the souldiers.

WE have hitherto heard many notable and excellent effects of prayes, which proceede from



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true faith and repentance. For those prayers piercing the heavens, found fauour with God: made open a safe entrance for

*Ester* vnto the King, obtayned his good will, got a place for her petition, yea and obtained that which at the first she would not hope for, to wete, the shamefull death of *Haman* the most cruell enemy

of the Church, the great honours of *Mardocheus* succeeding in his place, a Proclamation in fauour of the Iewes, fro

which there arose a publick ioy vnto all the people, whereof we spake in the last Sermon. Such and so great were the fruites

which the prayer of faith brought vnto the Iewes, who fled vnto God by their prayers, as vnto their only helper and de

fender in their greatest troubles and distress. There remaineth the greatest and most excellent effect, proceeding fro the

same cause, to wete, the victorie which they had ouer all their enemies, whome

being armed with the authoritie of the chiefe Magistrate, they vitterly destroyed, to execute the iust vengeance of God

against the enemies of his Church. Let us then the execution of the decree: the very same day, wherein the enemies

the Iewes hoped to haue dominion ouer them, they could not resist them, because the Lord had cast a feare into them; and because *Mardocheus* had gotten so great fauour and authoritie with all men, that euen the greatest and noblest peeres did reuerence him. So that it was no marueile if the Iewes euen at their pleasure did turne backe againe vpon their enemies heads, the mischiefe which they practised against them. This whole matter is generally proposed in the five first verses, and then particularly explicated vntil the 17. verse. We shall deale at this present concerning those five hundred me which were slaine in *Susa* with the tenne sonnes of *Haman*, where there is set forth vnto vs very notable and most necessary doctrines, to wheet, that by feruent and faithfull prayer, all things are obtained from God; euen victorie against all sorts of enemies, as *Daniel* sheweth, *Psal. 56. 9.* When thou say vnto thee, mine enemies shall be turned into flight. Also, that God giueth strength vnto the weake, & weakeneth the minds of the strong; when it seemeth good vnto him. And farther, that the end of the enemies of the Church, is at the last



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shamefull and full of sorrow, and their  
wicked counsailes turne at the last to  
their destruction, and are made a ruine  
and cōfution vnto them. But these things  
will better be learned in the explication  
of the particulars.

First therefore the day of this execu-  
tion is noted the thirteenth day of the  
xij. moneth *Adar*, which answereth to  
part of our February, and the beginning  
of March. In that day the counsailes of  
the enemies are reported to fall out con-  
trary to their opinions: for whē they ho-  
ped to exercise dominion over the Iewes,  
they were ouerthrowen and subdued by  
the Iewes. So the lots which *Haman* cal-  
led that he might find out a fit day to root  
out the people of God, were found to be  
deceitfull and lying: and those who put  
their trust in them, receiued a iust reward  
of their impietic. Although therefore  
sometimes it fall out, that Satan the author  
of all forceries, inchantments, and diuina-  
tions, do speake truth (God by his iudgement  
& vengeance giuing force vnto his errors)  
yet this is his only end, to delude and draw  
into perdition all the curious folke which  
employ themselves

to such artes full of sacriledge and impie-  
tie: that those who were not lovers of the  
truth may perish as they have deserved,  
for as much as they have left God, in  
whome is the fountaine of life and truth,  
to turne themselves vnto the author of  
death, and father of lyes. By this meanes  
were our idolatrous Leaguers deceiued,  
who by force of the Bulles and Pardons  
they had from the Pope, of their Iubilees,  
Pilgrimages, and Processions, of their  
madnesse in the worshipping of images,  
and foolish deuotions, and by the fore-  
tellings of certaine Almanacks, and de-  
ceits of other like leger-du-maines, did  
promise vnto themselves the wished and  
happie end of their purposes, which was  
the abolishing of the Reformed Chur-  
ches, and doctrine of the Gospell: but  
the time and day which seemed vnto  
them most fit for their designements, was  
turned vnto them into a day of sorrow,  
shame, and eternall confusion.

Hearken now what way the Iewes  
tooke by the Kings permission to destroy  
their enemies, *They gathered themselves  
together in their cities through all the pro-  
uinces of the King Assuerus, to lay hand vpon*



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*those that sought their hurt.* They did then wisely provide for their affaires, so that they did not giue themselves so to ioy and gladnes, but that they did diligently stand vpon their guard, provided them of armour, gathered themselves together at certaine times & places, and principally did flee vnto God by prayer, desiring that he who hitherto had shewed them so great fauour, would make perfect the worke of their deliuerance. And surely then had they most neede of Gods help, when they were to fight with their enemies: for vnlesse God had daunted their courage, and weakened their force & prowesse, there was no hope that the Iewes could be vanquishers of their enemies. Furthermore, they contained themselves within the bounds of the Proclamation, that they would only vse force against those that sought their hurt: that is, those that were in armes to hurt them, their wiues and children: for this was the forme of the first edict, chap. 8. vers. 11. So that we must needs say, that the same day the enemies of the Iewes assembled, to destroy and slay them: for else how could they know who were their enemies: or

by what lawe could they haue vsed violence against those who kept themselves quiet and peaceable in their houses. But by what lawe did the enemies of the Jewes take armour against them? Euen bearing themselves bolde vpon the Kings Decree, which was not called backe, although one contrarie were published. Besides vpon the confidence of their lot-casters; and moued with the hatred of God, and true religion: being then principally driven by Gods secret prouidence to gather themselves together, that he might deliuer them into the hands of his people: and that they should receiue a iust vengeance of their vngodlinesse and crueltie, as God is sayd, *to harden the hearts of the Canaanites, to goe out to meete the Israelites in battaile; that so he might destroy and overthrow them vnder the pretence of this Proclamation.* Whereby it appeareth, that the King was not very carefull of the quiet and safetie of his people. For if he would not or could not call backe againe the former edict, why did hee not at the least secretly signifye, that hee woulde haue euery one

Gg 4      remaine



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remaine quiet, and leaue the Iewes vn-  
 touched. But marke heere the iust ven-  
 geance of God, when he is bent against  
 any kingdome: there is easly place giuen  
 vnto euill counsaile, and so all things are  
 troubled and turned vpside downe, so  
 that no place is left for sounde aduise:  
 Kings do not in time repressle the furie of  
 the wicked, but by their lenitie and neg-  
 ligence rather nourish it: and the people  
 following euill leaders, are caryed head-  
 long willingly and with a blinded course  
 into their owne destruction. The ene-  
 mies of the Iewes therefore do assemble  
 themselues furnished with weapon and  
 a minde to hurt them: but they can not  
 stand before the Iewes, nor resist them,  
 so much can a good cause, which vseth  
 good counsaile and lawfull meanes, pre-  
 uail, when it pleaseth God to cast a feare  
 vpon the enemies, as heere it is sayd, *That*  
*the feare of the Iewes fell vpon all people.*  
 For whence came this feare but fro God,  
 who made his seruants, though fewe in  
 number, to be terrible and cause of feare  
 to those, of whome most mightie nations  
 and all the people of the world stood in  
 feare: Is victorie then from any other  
 then

then from god, who feareth the enemies,  
and giueth vnto his, strength & courage.  
So say the faithfull when they set forth  
Gods praises, that neither by their owne nor  
their fathers sword came they into the pos- *Pf. 44. 3.*  
sessiō of the lād of Canaā, or did hold it so  
many yeares: but by Gods right hand, and  
the light of his countenance. So Dauid giuing  
God thanks for the victories which hee  
had gotten, saith, that he followed his ene- *Pf. 18. 38.*  
mies and stroke them, so that they were not a- *39. 40.*  
ble to arise, because God had girded him with  
strength, and had bowed downe those under  
him who had risen up against him. And in  
an other Psalm, he acknowledgeth that *Pf. 144. 1*  
it is God that teacheth his hands to fight and  
his fingers to warre. For this cause also the  
Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrewes,  
saith, that the auncient fathers through *Heb. 11. 34.*  
faith were made strong in battell, and tur-  
ned the Armies of the Alians into flight.  
These are the most sure and strong armor  
of the faithfull, whereby they are vnto all  
their enemies most fearefull and inuin-  
cible. Wherefore their arrogancie and  
rashnesse can neuer sufficiently be repro-  
ued and condemned, who professing  
themselves Christians, and fighting for  
religion,



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religio, think of nothing lesse, then of calling vpon God. Hence also we haue sufficient prooffe, how great the fauor of God is towards all that feare him and call vpon his name, and defend a iust cause with lawfull armes; when as he maketh euen an handfull as it were, offeely captiues dispersed heere and there, to be terrible to all the people of so great a Monarchie. These things then will vs to hope well in the lawfull defence of a iust cause, against the disturbers of publike peace and tranquillitie, and the sworne deadly enemies, not only of the state, but also of the truth. Thus haue ye the first & chiefest cause of the victorie, which the Iewes had ouer their enemies, who were terrified with feare and fled from them. The other followeth, that the *Rulers of the Prouinces, and the Princes, and the Captaines, & the officers of the king furthered the Iewes.* How much the fauour of rulers and those who are the kings officers can preuaile in the furthering of any part, no man is ignorant. But marke you heere a strange matter: the Princes and rulers take part with the Iewes, against the naturall subiects of the land: but they sufficiently perceiue

upon the backe of Astar. 459

to what part the Kings affection did bend; whose fauour when as they were willing to haue, they fauour that parts which the king is most affectionate vnto, although perhaps they with the Iewes vnterly destroyed.

Moreover, the feare of *Mordechai* had taken hold of them, that when they saw him in such fauour and authoritie with the King, and that all things were guided by his counsell, and ruled at his becke, they would also seeke to gratifie him. Out of which also it is euident, how that God not onely in a moment lifteth vp whom it pleaseth him, but also doth furnish them with Maiestie, spreading farre and wide the honour of their names, & by their exceeding great glory casting a feare of them far and neare into the hearts of men; and at the last repressing the sparks of enuie which comonly are wont to be kindled against such, as out of base estate do suddely rise vnto high honour. For who could sufficiently maruel that a man newly risen and a straunger, and bringing a maruellous change into the state, at his first comming, euē such as was hurtfull & dammageable vnto the naturall subiects

of



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of the King, should not be open vnto the  
hatred, enuie and slaunders of all men,  
and especially of those who thought so  
much to bee abated from their dignitie,  
how much he was exalted? but so much  
the more clearly doth God shewe him-  
selfe to be hee who at his good pleasure  
lifteth vp men and throweth them down,  
and that he hath in his hand the harts and  
wils of men, which he turneth what way  
pleaseth him: Wherefore wee are heere  
taught to depend on his prouidence, and  
to rest wholly thereon, not curiously see-  
king how they are promoted vnto honor  
who take vpon them the defence of the  
Church, or by what meanes they retaine  
it, and how they auoyd the hatred of one,  
and the deceits of an other; and finally  
how they defend themselves from many  
daungers which stand round about them.  
For hee that exalted *Mardocheus*, and  
made him to be reuerenced and feared of  
the Princes, and preserved vnto him his  
dignitie safe and whole, knoweth also by  
what meanes to defend and protect those  
whose worke he will vse, to the defence  
of his Church, scattering and turning to  
nought all the craftie counsels of the ene-  
mies

upon the booke of Esther

emies which shall threaten any evil against them.

But heere especially this is to be observed, that *Mardocheus* did ascend unto this honour by these steps, godlinesse, the feare of God, zeale of his glory, a pure affection of helping and defending the Church; so farre forth as it pleased God to put to his hands to give any quiet and tranquillitie vnto the Church, which was so miserably afflicted. By these vertues then is the dignitie of those who undertake the defence of the state of the Church encreased, and by the same shall it continue. These are the means which it pleaseth God to vse to the succouring of his.

Let vs now looke into the execution of that vengeance which was granted vnto the childre of God against their enemies, which is set downe in generall in the fifth verse, and after particularly prosecuted in those which follow. The Lewes then are said to have strooken with the edge of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and to haue don vnto those that hated them what they listed. So that although the enemies fled, and by reason of that feare where-  
with



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which they were stricken durst not resist,  
yet were they sought out to be destroy-  
ed, and to receive full reward of their  
iniquitie. Which thing the Iewes with  
a good conscience might doo, seeing  
they were armed with the authoritie of  
God, and of the chiefe Magistrate,  
and also by all lawes both humane and  
diuine in a lawfull warre and mutu-  
all defence against those which sought  
their life, it was euer permitted for to  
doe.

Neither doth it here any whit helpe  
to say, that they were to be spared, be-  
cause they tooke armes being deceived  
with the shewe of the former Edict: be-  
cause that euery one who was not alto-  
gether voyde of humanitie, or blinded  
with despite, might easily of himselfe  
iudge, that that Edict was beyond all  
equitie.

But if any againe shall except  
that there was no place for reuenge, see-

*Dent. 32. 35* ing it is written, *Vengeance is mine* and

*Mat. 5. 44* Christ Iesus biddeth his, *to loue their*  
*enemies*: the aunswere is easie, that  
**GOD**, who forbiddeth private re-  
uenge, which euery priuate man ta-  
keth

keth vpon him in his owne cause; doth  
 also commaunde those to whome hee  
 hath committed the sworde to doe  
 iustice, to exercise his iudgements,  
 and to execute vengeance and reuenge.  
 so that hee hath oftentimes hardly chid-  
 den and seuerely punished those who  
 by foolish pittie and clemencie haue  
 beene more slacke in executing those  
 iudgements of God, and who haue spar-  
 red those enemies whom God hath com-  
 manded to be slaine. This is euident in  
 Saul, when as he spared the life of Agag,  
 the king of the Amalekites, and in Achab  
 when he made league with Benadab the  
 King of Syria, the most deadly enemy of  
 the people of God, vnto whom GOD  
 commanded his Prophet to tell, that see-  
 ing hee had spared a man that was wor-  
 thie to die, his life should be pledge for  
 the others, and the life of his people for  
 the life of the people of his enemy. There-  
 fore also Salomon saith, He that iustifieth the  
 wicked, and he that condemneth the righte-  
 ous, they both are an abomination vnto the  
 Lord.  
 Now who I pray you, are more wor-  
 thy to die, then those who with a sealed  
 and

1. Sam. 15.

2. Kin. 20.

42.

Pro. 17. 15.



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and grounded hatred, do endenour by all waies and meanes they may to destroy the godly, spoyle their goods, deprive them of their dignities, roote out the Church, and extinguish the truth: why then should they whom the Magistrate armeth with publike authoritie, and God calleth therunto, spare those that are such? But Christ commandeth to loue our enemies: I confesse: but after the manner of a good Iudge, who doth command those that are condemned to be caried to execution, and yet loueth them and is sorrowful for their euill: so that to loue and to kill are not so contrarie, but that they may meete at the same instant, in one and the same man, who by reason of his dutie and office exerciseth the iudgements of God against the wicked, of whom hee hateth not the nature, but the vntamed wickednesse which cannot be cured by any medicines but by cutting off. Neither doeth God alwaies obserue one manner in reuenging himselfe vpon his enemies.

For diuers times he performeth his worke without the worke and ministerie of men, as when *Pharo* was drowned be-

ing

ing overwhelmed with the waves of the *Exod. 14.*  
 Sea and *Senacherib* host wholly de- *2. Ki. 19. 35.*  
 stroyed in one night by an Angell. Di-  
 vers times by his enemies themselves mu- *Jud. 7. 21.*  
 tually destroying one another, as in the  
*Madianite* battell; and in that fight *2. Chr. 20.*  
 wherein that great armie which came a-  
 gainst *Jehosaphat*, did among themselves  
 destroy themselves. Divers times also that  
 most commonly, he vseth the hands and  
 weapons of his people to beate down the  
 fiercenesse of the enemies, who rose up a-  
 gainst him. So by the hand of *Isaiah*, the  
 King and people of *Assyria*, were van-  
 quished and destroyed: So by the Judges  
 were they overcome, who oppressed his  
 people: So *David* and other Kings of his  
 posteritie did subdue and bring under  
 many Nations. Here God would by the  
 hand of these poore captives, overthrow  
 the pride and malice of the enemies of his  
 Church, that they might be terrified, that  
 though God had chastised his people,  
 yet had he not altogether cast them from  
 him, but rather contrariwise, was present  
 with in fit and convenient time to defend  
 and protect them against the violence of  
 their enemies.

22, 23.

11. 22. 23.

21

Hh

More



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Moreover, hereby we perceiue what punishment the enemies of the Church doe deserue, and what shall be their success at the last. Besides, here it is cleare how those who conspire against the Church at the last perish through their owne deuises. For *Haman* and all that multitude whom he had stirred vp to overthrow the Church, might haue liued peaceably and honorably, if they had attempted no new matters; but by the iust and secret iudgment and vengeance of God, they with great ado kindle a fire, and are at the last choked with the flame. This same thing *Isai* threatneth vnto the enemies of the Church of God in these words, *Isai. 33. 11.* *shall conceiue chaffe, and bring forth stubble, your owne breath is the fire that shall deuoure you. And the people shall be as the burning of lime; and as thornes cut shall they be burnt in the fire.*

That which was spoken in general is in partes deliuered in the verses following, to wit, that there were five hundred men slaine by the Iewes in *Susa*, the Citie royall, and amongst them the tenne sonnes of *Haman*, whose names are for the greater credit of the Historie,

reci

persecuted.

It is maruell that in *Susa* the Citie  
 byall, any durst mooue against them;  
 when as so many signes of the Kings fa-  
 our which hee shewed to *Mardocheus*  
 and the other Iewes could not be hidde:  
 but the vengeance of God will not suf-  
 fer the wicked to rest, who retaine that  
 fire and rage to doo hurt in their harts,  
 out of necessitie they will breake forth,  
 and be carried headlong (as wilde beasts  
 into the nets) vpon the lawfull wea-  
 pons which God had furnished his peo-  
 ple with. Yet notwithstanding, all that  
 rose vp against the Iewes in *Susa*, could  
 not in one day be taken, wherefore a  
 more diligent search is deferred vntill  
 the next day, as after words shall  
 shew. As concerning *Hamans* sonnes, they  
 were deservedly punished by death, first  
 because they were of the stocke of the *A-*  
*melekites*, concerning whom God had  
 commanded that they should be vtterly  
 destroyed, and not one of them left  
 alive. Besides, because it is likely  
 that in desire of reuenge of theyr fa-  
 thers shamefull death, they had done  
 that they might in stirring vnto sedition,

Hh 2

those



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those mutinous fellows which they could find, either in that great Citie of *Susa*, or in any other where they had any authoritie. So that happened vnto *Haman*, which the Spirit of God pronounceth should come vpon the wicked, and the enemy of his glory, to wit, that which *Iob* saith

*Iob. 18. 19*

*He shall neither haue sonne nor nephew among his people, nor any posteritie in his dwelling whereunto also appertaineth that which is, Psal. 21. 10. Their fruite shall thou destroy from the earth, and their seede from the children of men.* Wherefore the wicked who are so carefull for their posteritie, destroy them by their owne wicked devices, and ouerthrow them by their furious practises, when euen from their fancie they teach them to hate the true and persecute the Church of God. And if sometime the stocke of the Good God so willing it, do decay, this doth not happen in his wrath, but with a certaine testimonie of his fauour and mercie towards them. For what soeuer come to passe, this remaineth vnmoueable

*Psal. 115. 16.*

*The death of the righteous is precious before God.*

What then remaineth but that we be careful

*upon the booke of Ester.* 469

carefully employ our selues to righteou-  
nesse and holinesse, call vnfaignedly vp-  
on God in all our necessities and calami-  
ties, patiently expect his helpe, and  
wait for his vengeance against our ene-  
mies, whose good and saluation yet let vs  
seeke, that so they beeing turned vnto  
God, rather then turned from him and  
destroyed, we may altogether sincerely &  
with all our hearts, serue him in Christ  
Iesus his sonne our Lord, to whom bee  
glorie, prayse, and dominion, for euer.

*Amen.*

## THE THREE AND twentieth Sermon.

*The rest of the execution of the Edict,  
and of the ful victorie which the Iewes  
obtained against their enemies: from  
the 11. verse of the 9. Chapter, vnto  
the 17.*

I. On the same day came the number of  
those that were slaine in Susa, the Citie  
royall, before the King.

Hh 3

12. And



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**12.** And the King said vnto the Queeno Ester, The Iewes haue slaine in Susa the Citie royall, and destroyed five hundred men, and the ten sons of Haman: what haue they done in the rest of the kings prouinces? Now what is thy petition that it may be giuen thee? or what is thy request moreouer that it may be performed?

**13.** Then said Ester, if it please the King, let it be graunted also to morrow to the Iewes that are in Susa, to do according vnto this dayes decree: and that they may hang vpon the tree Hamans tenne sonnes.

**14.** And the King charged to do so, and the decree was giuen at Susa, and they hanged Hamans ten sonnes.

**15.** So the Iewes that were in Susa assembled themselves on the fourteenth day of the moneth Adar, and slew three hundred men in Susa, but on the spoyle they laied not their hand.

**16.** And the rest of the Iewes that were in the kings prouinces assembled themselves, and stood for their liues, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them, seuentie and five thousand; but they laied not their hand vpon the spoyle.

Every

**E**Very man confesseth that victorie commeth from God, so that there is scarcely any found euen among the Heathen so wicked or stubborne, who hauing obtained a victorie, did not by some signe testifie his thankfulness vnto him whō he supposed to be a god. But this was so proper and peculiar vnto the people of *Israel*, as beeing better instructed, that they haue made therof a proper name of God, calling him the *God of Hostes*.

And if hee worthily be acknowledged the giuer of all victories, how much more of those, in which expressly dooth shine his especiall fauour and goodnesse towards his Church, so that in euery part thereof, the beginning, middle and ende, an happie and blessed token of his grace, and wonderful power is apparant: which in this most happie victorie of the Iewes did come to passe, who, by Gods fauour, though they were seely captiues, and dispersed through the Prouinces of the Empire of *Assarius*, did yet triumphe over their enemies, so that no man cannot call it into question, but that the hand of God was mightily stretched out for their safetie and commoditie.



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Wee haue alreadie seene the beginning: It remaineth that wee see also the proceeding and end, the summe whereof is; that by the Kings permission and decree, the ten sonnes of *Haman* were hanged on a tree; three hundred men more slaine in *Susa*; and in the other Prouinces seuentie and five thousand; without any losse of the Lewes, without any sedition following, without any hatred or publicke enuie against the King, and finally without any conspiracie or farther attempt against the Lewes. All which are so much the more wonderfull, by how much the rarer they are, and obtained so happie an issue. For how could the king so lay open his naturall subiects to be slaine and destroyed by straungers? how could a woman obtaine so much? how could soeely captiues dare commit so great a slaughter? how could so mightie a people suffer it, without some extraordinarie motion and Gods speciall fauour? There is therefore heere proposed vnto vs, a most profitable doctrine of the loue of G O D towards his Church; of the vengeance which he taketh on his enemies; and of the peace & tranquillitie

which

which he giueth to his, who call vpon him  
in their greatest troubles. But wee shall  
better vnderstand these things by the se-  
uerall explication of euery part.

First it is sayd, *That vpon that day the  
number of those that were slaine in Susa the  
Iudie royall, came before the King.* It is not  
knownen by whome, or vpon what intent  
the king was certified of the number of  
the slaine. It seemeth very likely vnto  
me, that it was done by some, who by tel-  
ling that there were so many slaine in one  
citie, would willingly haue stirred vp the  
kings wrath & hatred against the Iewes.  
But whence so euer the King was certi-  
fied, it is certaine it was a sufficient mes-  
sage to haue stirred the kings mind vnto  
a just anger for the slaughter of his subjects  
made euen as it were in his sight. For in  
such bloudie slaughters, kings if they haue  
not cast off all humanitie, and naturall af-  
fection, at last repent them of that which  
ouer-rashly they granted, and are angry  
with those by whome they were perswa-  
ded and induced vnto it. Besides, this  
might call to mind that his subjects  
had attempted nothing against the Iewes  
but by his commandement, and that there



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was too great libertie granted to a strange people against the naturall subiects, and that the courage of his people was too much daunted. But none of all these things come vnto his mind, but he goeth merily vnto the Queene, reioycing for her sake at the number of those that were slaine, and againe giuing her libertie to demand whatsoever she list. For these are the words of our author: *The king said vnto Ester the Queene, The Iewes haue killed and destroyed in Susa the citie royall five hundred men, and the tenne sonnes of Haman: what haue they done in the rest of the Kings provinces? Now what is thy demand, and it shall be giue thee, or what is thy petition moreouer, and it shall be done.* By these words he doth partly gratifie Ester, in the reuenge abundantly taken vpon her enemies: partly also giueth her power to do somewhat more if she list, that nothing may be omitted which she would desire to the full reuenge on the enemies of her people. Whereby it appeareth, that hee did all these things more vpon passion then by reason, and that he would rather please his wife in the affection of his loue, then haue care of his subiects in regard of iustice. For seeing he

was an infidel, he sought not Gods glory, whome he knew not, neither the quiet of the Church, whose doctrine he did not vnderstand. And if in regard and loue of iustice he would haue repressed the malice of his subiects, which sought the destruction of the Iewes, yet vnlesse he had cast off all humanitie and all care which a king ought to haue of his subiects, he wold haue lamēted that the blood of his people armed at his cōmandement, should so miserably haue bin shed. Among the chiefest cōmendations of a good Prince, this is not the least, that he hold the blood of his subiects deare & pretious: and prouide by good lawes and constitutions that by tumults blood be not shed, and that it be not made lawfull by a confused libertie warranted by the lawes, for one to make assault vpon an other. But for the most part it commeth to passe that Kings little esteeme the life of mē, whom they thinke onely to be borne for their pleasure: so that they sell nothing for a lesse price, many times more carefull of a little pleasure or honor, then of the preservation of many thousand mē's lines, as though that losse might most easily of al be recovered. But whatsoeuer heere hapned, God did yse



476 *The three and twentieth Sermon*  
vse this scarce humane affection of the  
king towards his people, and his ouergreat  
willingnesse to pleasure the Queene, to  
the procuring of peace and tranquillitie  
to his Church, and to the taking of re-  
uenge vpon the hatred and despite of his  
enemies. So great then is the goodnesse  
of God, that he maketh all things to turne  
to the commoditie and profite of his: so  
great also his wisdom and puritie, that  
those things which are rashly and incon-  
siderately done by men, he conuerteth in-  
to his glorie. For we see that *Assuerus* doth  
not any thing heere aduisedly, but onely  
of a vehement and forcible affection to  
please his wife: who, if he had had many  
an immoderate and vnmodest woman,  
would haue forced him to do many vn-  
iust and wrongfull matters. And indeede  
it is not seemely for kings to be too large  
and prodigall in their promises; and to  
subiect the liues of his subiects and go-  
uernment of their affayres vnto the lust  
and pleasure of a woman.

This so liberall a grant made vnto E-  
ster, she demandeth, *If it seeme good vnto*  
*the King, let it be granted vnto the Iewes*  
*which are in Susa, to do to morrow according*  
*his booke, banquet and iustice vnto*

unto this dayes decree; and the tenne sonnes  
of Haman to be hanged on the gallies. By  
this demand, it is sufficiently manifest, that  
many who either by bearing of weapon  
or some other meanes, had the day be-  
fore shewed themselves enemies vnto  
the Iewes were escaped, the Iewes not  
being ignorant thereof, because they were  
not sufficient in number to follow them:  
farder also it appeareth, that the tenne  
sonnes of Haman conspired or consented  
with their father vnto the destruction of  
the Iews. But this demand of the Queene  
at first blush may seeme to proceede frō  
too much desire of reuenge: for was it  
not sufficient that in the citie of Susa on-  
ly, there were slaine with the edge of the  
sword five hundred men; but that shee  
must also desire to rage yet more cruelly  
against those that had escaped, when as  
euen in the most bloudie battailes, and  
between the most deadly enemies, after  
the furie of the conflict, those who haue  
escaped, either yeeld themselves, and so  
are to be carried into bondage, or set free  
for their ranfome; or else the victorie on-  
ly doth suffice? Besides, doth not that  
seeme also to passe the bounds of huma-  
nity,



478 *The three and twentieth Sermon*  
nitie, to desire to haue the tenne sonnes  
of *Haman* to be hanged with shame and  
reproch, being alreadie slaine, when as  
many haue granted buriall vnto their e-  
nemies being slaine? But the godlinesse of  
*Ester* which she shewed in all her life,  
doth hinder that we should thinke that  
she gaue place to any passion: but on the  
contrarie, wee must rather say that shee  
sought the glorie of God in the reuenge  
of the enemies of his people, and the  
quiet and tranquillitie of the Church,  
which those who were escaped might  
when they sawe their time disturbe, and  
therefore she desired that the rest might  
be punished, and *Hamans* sonnes hanged  
on the gallows as they had deserued, for  
example vnto those who are not ashamed  
to abuse the name, authoritie and forces  
of the King, to effect their wicked coun-  
sels & practises; and to the detestation of  
those, who with all their power go about  
the destruction of the Church. So that  
the free speech and holy boldnesse of *E-*  
*ster*, is rather to be praysed in following  
the punishment of the wicked, then to be  
condemned as though she had bin a slave  
vnto her affections. For we reade that  
God

God hath approved the like punishments against the wicked and vngodly, as it appeareth in the seven sonnes of *Saul*, who were deliuered by *Dauid* to the *Gibeonites* 2. Sam. 21. to be hanged on the gallows, because *Saul* had broken the oth and faith giue of old time by the *Israelites* to the *Gibeonites*. Num. 25. Besides, God commanded the Princes of the congregatiō which had led the people into wickednes with the idols & women of the *Madianites* to be hanged; and many thousands of the rest of the people to be slaine with the sword, so to satisfie the wrath of God. So *Gedeon* not content *Iud. 7. & 8.* with this, that the *Madianites* were slaine with their owne swords, doth follow with all his force vpon the rest, and did execute punishment for example vnto others, vpon those who being requested would not helphim. God forbid therefore that we should reprove as faultie, all sharp and seuerer punishment which is executed against the enemies of Gods people. Notwithstanding whosoever he be that will imitate such examples, must first most diligentlie search his owne heart, that vnder a false pretence hee giue not place vnto any euill passion of



480 *The three and twentieth Sermon*  
of the flesh. In which thing the slip is  
easie, which thing by their example those  
two disciples of Christ do teach vs, who  
by a peruerse imitation of the fact of *E-*  
*lias*, would haue fire to descend from hea-  
uen, to consume that citie of the *Sama-*  
*ritanes*, which shut their gates against the  
Lord when he would haue entred.

*Lut. 9.44.*

Now the King heere sheweth him-  
selfe as easie to be intreated in granting  
the petition of *Ester*, as he was in promi-  
sing. For hee is reported to haue com-  
manded that it should be done, so that  
there was a Decree given at *Susa*, where  
by they hanged the tenne sonnes of *Ha-*  
*man*. As soone then as *Ester* had spoken,  
the commandement was given and pub-  
lished, God so enclining the kings heart,  
that the Church might afterward enjoy  
the more firme peace and tranquillitie.  
For otherwise it might worthily seeme  
a wonder, that the King should make so  
little account to spend the bloud of his  
subiects, whome he so easily layd open  
vnto the slaughter: and that he feared  
not sedition in his people, or that he was  
accounted by them a Tyrant, who by co-  
trarie edicts would arme his people one  
against

against another, and play as it were with  
the blood of his subiects. But hee neuer  
thought on any of these things: it was  
enough for him to gratifie *Ester*. Where-  
by it appeareth, that his power was suffi-  
ciently established: whereby he was the  
bolder to dispose of the life of his subiects.  
Heereby also we may perceiue, how mu-  
table the fauour of Kings is: and how  
shame and reproch do follow those who  
abuse their honor and prosperitie.

The commandement being published,  
the Iewes are readie for the execution:  
for it is sayd, that the *Iewes which were at*  
*Susa, gathered themselves together upon*  
*the fourteenth day also of the moneth Adar,*  
*and slew three hundred men in Susa, but layd*  
*not their hand on the spoyle.* In which, their  
constancie and boldnesse deserueth high  
commendation, & admiration: for they  
might haue used many delayes; and cast  
many doubts; they might haue excused  
themselues, that they should runne into  
harmes and the noise of bloudthirstie men;  
and moreover might haue pretended that  
it was to be feared, least hereafter the  
Kings minde changing, they should be  
called to an account for the shedding of



so much blood : as wee see that such  
 wounds often waxe rawe againe though  
 they seeme healed, in all states, such a  
 slaughter being made, how good so euer  
 the cause be. They might also except  
 that there was more commendation in  
 remitting somewhat of their right, and  
 dealing mercifully, then in prosecuting  
 their iniuries with extreme rigour. But  
 when as they perceived that they were  
 called by God, and armed with the au-  
 thoritie of the lawfull Magistrate, and  
 did set before their eyes the chearfulnesse  
 of their auncestors in executing Gods  
 iudgements, they overcome all these dif-  
 ficulties, and execute the worke they are  
 commanded, looking vpon this, that God  
 would no lesse be praised and glorified in  
 the punishing of his enemies, then in the  
 mercy and protection shewed vnto his.  
 They might therefore with a good con-  
 sciēce execute that, which the king with-  
 out sufficiēt & stayed counsaile had gran-  
 ted. Howbeit, it belongeth not any rashly,  
 and but with great discretion & wisdom  
 to follow these kinde of examples: least  
 both those who yeeld themselves being  
 overcome, and those who fight in the  
 heate

heads of the battaile, be accounted both  
alike, and without difference be slaine. Also  
there is alwayes a great difference to be  
kept betweene an infidell, and him that  
profelleth the same religion with vs, be-  
twene a stranger, and a citizen: finally,  
there are many circumstances of times,  
persons, lawes and customes, whereby it  
fallerh out, that neither we may, neither  
is it lawfull to imitate this fact: in which  
notwithstanding, it is not to be doubted  
but the Iewes kept themselves within  
the boundes of the Edict, and did onely  
execute crueltie against those who had  
professed themselves open enemies, and  
had sought the death and destruction  
of them, their wiues and children. For o-  
therwise, it had bene an vnruely libertie  
& confusion, if they might without con-  
trowlement set vpon whomsoever they  
would say was their enemy. For these are  
the effects of an headlesse sedition, to  
war cruell against all whomsoever they  
met, friend or foe, guiltlesse or guiltie:  
And when, as none of the other inhabi-  
tants of Syria did stirre, it is to be affirmed  
that the Iewes did not abuse their power,  
neither killed any which was innocent:



and besides, that God opened the eyes of those who remained peaceable and quiet to see the Barbarous iniustice of the former edict, and to perceive the good cause of the Jewes, grounded as well on naturall equitie, as vpon the iustice and authoritie of the latter decree: so great is the force of right, equitie, and truth, that those who were dead, were iudged by their fellow citizens to be rightfully slain. And thus far of those things which were done at Susa.

Let vs now passe vnto those things which were done by the Jewes that were dispersed through the other prouinces, weete; *The other Jewes did gather themselves together, that standing for their lawe they might be quiet from their enemies, and slew of those that hated them 75. thousand but on the spoile they laid not their hand.* So that there was one manner and the like in all those places, saying that the Jewes which were in the prouinces in one day dispatched the whole matter, taking vengeance vpon their enemies: the number of whome is heere expressly set downe whereby the excellencie of this victory might be the better knowne vnto all

which





486 The three and twentieth Sermon  
the King; when oftentimes for le-  
cacles; as feare or some light suspition  
Subjects hade risen against their Prince.  
All these effects therefore of the Lord  
right hand, are most worthy to be noted  
whereunto also this is to be adioyned,  
howe of the Iewes perished in this feare  
the Lord providing for them the swe-  
test of so great a victorie and admir-  
deliberate! So hath the Lord oftentimes  
wrought; that he might make it knowne  
vnto all the world, that his people are  
vnto him, as the apple of his eye, as he saith  
in Zacharie, chap. 2. v. 8. Besides  
that that so great a number of the e-  
nemies were destroyed, God would shew  
how great a fault it is to rise vp against  
Church his Spouse, and to seek her  
desertion. Wherefore it is said in *Isaiah*  
*28. 16.* of the Lord of Hostes will perse-  
cute: and vers. 23. of the same chapter  
vpbraideth the insolencie of Sennacherib  
against his Church in these words, *W*  
*hast thou rayled on and blasphemed!*  
*against whom hast thou exalted thy voyce?*  
*hast thou lifted up the haughtinesse of thine*  
*eyes against the holy one of Israel.* By  
sermons hast thou rayled on the Lord.

*Isai. 37. 32.*

the Lord, willing to shewe the horrible  
 vengeance of his wrath against his ene-  
 mies, sayeth by *Moses*, *I will lift up my* *Deut. 32.*  
*hand to heaven and say: I live for ever.* *40. 41.*  
*If I whet my glittering sword, and my*  
*hand take holde on iudgement, I will exe-*  
*cute vengeance on mine enemies, and will*  
*reward them that hate mee. I will make*  
*mine arrows drinke with blood, when the*  
*cloud of the slayns and of the captives, and*  
*my sword shall eate flesh, when I be gime*  
*to take vengeance of the enemies. And do*  
 we not in these dayes in part, see the  
 like effects of Gods wrath against his  
 enemies, after that he hath chastised his  
 Church? Could there any thing seeme  
 more to be marveiled at, then that which  
 God hath set before our eyes? to weet;  
 the enemies of the Church armed against  
 themselves; the innocencie of the Church  
 approved; the conspiratours condemned  
 of disobedience and rebellion; the King  
 made their enemy; and he again by them  
 as far as their power stretched, deposed &  
 deprived of all dignitie; finally the whole  
 furthen of the warre turned from the faith-  
 full, and turned against the rebellious ci-  
 ties. We have not yet I grant, obtained so



## 432 The three and twentieth Season

happie shewd, neither do we as yet enjoy  
so great prosperitie, but that there is daily  
offered vnto vs great matter to cast down  
our selues before God, and to pray for his  
fauour with teares & repentance, where  
by at the last hee may bring an ende vnto  
those manifold confusions, and all kind  
of mischiefes which euill warres do draw  
with them. Howbeit, these so wonder  
full works of God are neuerthelesse to  
be obserued, that wee may extoll him  
with deserued prayse, and giue him con  
digne thanks, as we are invited by the

**Psal. 66. 5.** Prophet in these words, *Come and behold the works of God; he is terrible in his doing toward the sonnes of men;* and likewise **Psal. 46. 3.** *O come and behold the works of the Lord.* Moreover, that we may learn to flee vnto him in our greatest distresses, and patiently expect his help; constantly every one do our duties in our vocations, tremble vnder his iudgement, and depend on his mercie, whereof at the last he will make vs partakers in Christ Iesus, to whome be all glorie and dominion for euermore. Amen.

11 5 11

# THE FOURE AND twentieth Sermon.

The publike and solempne ioy of the Iewes  
for the victorie obtained, which Mar-  
dochzus doth consecrate to be yearly  
celebrated for ever with solempn rites  
from verse 17. unto 19. of the 9. Chap-  
ter.

17. This they did on the thirteenth day  
of the moneth Adar, and rested the four-  
teenth day thereof, and kept it a day of fea-  
sting and ioy.

18. But the Iewes that were in Susa, af-  
sembled themselves on the thirteenth day  
and on the fourteenth thereof, and they  
rested on the fifteenth of the same, and  
kept it a day of feasting and ioy.

19. Therefore the Iewes of the Villages  
that dwelt in the walled Townes kept  
the fourteenth day of the moneth Adar,  
with ioy and feasting, euen a ioyfull day,  
and euery one sent presents unto his neigh-  
bour.



490 The twentieth four Sermon

20. For Mordecai wrote these words, and sent Letters unto all the Jewes that were in all the Provinces of the king Assuerus, both neare and farre.

21. Inioyning them that they should keepe the fourteenth day of the moneth Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, every year.

22. According to the dayes wherein the Jewes rested from their enemies, and the moneth which was turned unto the from sorrow to ioy, and from mourning into a ioyfull day, to keepe them the dayes of feasting and ioy, and to send presents every man to his neighbour, and giftes to the poore.

23. And the Jewes promised to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them.

24. Because Haman the sonne of Hammedatha, the Adversary of all the Jewes, had imagined against the Jewes to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is a lot) to consume and destroy them.

Besides, and every one sent presents to his neighbour.

**B**esides, that one and onely sacrifice of  
the Sonne of God, once offered for  
the remission of our finnes, of which  
the olde sacrifices were figures; these  
have bin alwaies among the faithfull two  
sortes of sacrifice most acceptable vnto  
God, the one, the sacrifice of a contrite  
and broken heart, the effect of true repent-  
tance in aduersitie; and the other, of praise  
and thanks-giving in prosperitie: that the  
one of these may yeelde vnto God the  
praise of iustice in correcting vs; the o-  
ther may set forth his bountie & clem-  
encie, in deliuering vs from euils. We haue  
seene before in the fourth Chapter, how  
the Jewes in their troubles offered vnto  
God the sacrifice of an humble and con-  
trite heart; and what fruite they reaped  
from this conuersion vnto God, with fa-  
sting, weeping and prayer, to win, deliue-  
rance by God; as it wete out of the iawes  
of their enemies; and a most admi-  
rable victorie: ther remaineth now for vs to see  
how hauing received so great benefits at  
Gods hand, they offered vnto him with  
great ioy & gladnes, the sacrifice of praise  
and thanks-giving; & therof would haue  
a perpetuall monument to remaine of old

Ps. 51. 17

& 50. 14

23



492 *The Twentie foure Sermon*

In three verses, then it is recited how all the Jewes willingly and of their own accord, did celebrate their day of rest with gladnesse, giving thanks vnto God for the benefite receiued: they who dwelt in the Provinces vpon the foureteenth day, and those who dwelt in *Susa*, vpon the fifteenth: afterward it is declared how *Mordochew* by a publike writing ordaind shabbos for two dayes should be obserued amongst the Jewes, by a perpetuall decree: and that this was willingly accepted by them, and againe ratified in the name of *Ester* and *Mordochew*: and these things are contained in the latter end of the Chapter. At this present we are to consider that which is contained from the 17 verse to the 25. whereout we learne, with what gladnesse and what fortuitousness of shinde, the benefite and deliuerances of our eternall God, are to be acknowledged by vs, and set forth with praise. To  
 331 The Jewes then which dwelt in the Provinces out of the Citie *Susa*, when as vpon the thirteenth day they had now obtained a full victorie ouer their enemies, and rest from them; rested vpon the foureteenth day, and that day was  
 vnto

vnto the next day of ioy and gladnesse: but those who dwell in Syria, being as yet occupied on the fourteenth day in following the rest of their enemies, rested on the fifteenth day, giving themselves vnto ioy in the honour of God; and celebrating the memorie of their deliuerance: this is the sum of these three verses, which are now more diligently to be weighed by vs.

Neither of these then, either those that dwell in the Villages, or those that dwell in the Citie, doo deferre the matter and delay it vntill an other time, but by and by after the victorie, they consecrate the next day to the praise of God, and thanks-giving, which is vnderstoode out of that word, *They rested*. For it is spoken of an holy rest, and dedicated to the setting forth of the goodnesse of God: for why otherwise should there be mention made of *Rest*: when no man is ignorant, that after labour rest followeth, and after victorie, ioy and gladnesse? This therefore which heere is spoken of, is a rest dedicated to God: which is afterward better exprested, when as *Mozes* sheweth vnto those two to bee holy dayes



484 The month of seven  
dayes vnto them and to their posteritie,  
that it might be a perpetuall memorie &  
monument of their deliuerance and of  
that safetie which they had by their pray-  
er and fasting obtained at Gods hand: as  
it is expressely noted after. verse 31. No  
ma is ignorant that the rest of holy dayes  
ought altogether to be consecrated vnto  
God, that his workes may be set forth, his  
prayfes sung, his goodnesse, might and  
power magnified: that by this means  
they might exhort one another to repose  
their trust in him, to feare him and wor-  
ship him in all holinesse for ever: but yet  
with diuers maner of praise, according to  
the varietie of the matter, for the which  
the feasts were ordained. So the seventh  
day, which by an excellencie is called the  
day of rest, instituted as the feast of the  
natiuitie of the world, was dedicated yn-  
to God to set forth, and call to remem-  
brance, his goodnesse, power and wise-  
dome, in the creation of the world, and  
his most wise government of the same.  
This onely feast do we reade to be cele-  
brated from the beginning of the world.

*Exod. 12.* vntill the departure of the people out of  
e 13. e *Egypt*: at which time the Lord added

the

the feast of the *Passeover*, and of vnto  
ned bread; for a perpetuall remembrance of  
gods, saving the people frō the hād of the  
Angell, which slew the first borne of the  
Egyptians, and of bringing them out of  
bondage, that they might be vnto him an  
holy people, and a Nation free to serve  
him.

After when God had given his law  
in mount *Sinai*, and had ordained the  
forme of his service, and appoynted both  
the ciuill policie, and Ecclesiasticall a-  
mong that people, the feast of *Passeover*  
was adioyned to the former, for the me-  
morial of so great a benefit, whereby God  
had shewed himselfe to be the *Treasurer*  
King and law-giver of his people. Then  
the people entering into the land of *Cana-*  
*an*, the feast of *Tabernacles* was decreed  
in remembrance of the benefits which the  
people receiued by the space of 40. years  
in the wilderness. There were also besides  
certain feasts as the *Kalends* of every Mo-  
eth, which wer the first day of every new  
Moone, that they might bee warned that  
all good things came vnto them frō god,  
and proceeded not frō the course of the  
Moone, or the influence of other starres.

Besides



1446 The fourth fiftie Sermon  
Consider the feastes of Trumpet and Ex-  
piation, whereby they might learne, that  
the filthynesse was onely washed away  
by the mercie of God in the blood of the  
Messias which was to come. Hence there-  
fore the Iewes being deliuered by the  
onely goodnesse of God, and following  
the examples of their auncestors, would  
give thanks vnto God for so great a de-  
liverance, and to this end dedicated vnto  
God a day of rest: and when as they had  
not meanes to offer the sacrifices prescrib-  
ed in the law, because they were farre  
from the Temple, they offered at the least  
the sacrifice of praise. They are not repor-  
ted to haue made any new songs, as at  
time past *Moses*, *Deborah*, *Anna* the mo-  
ther of *Samuel*, *David* in many places  
and other holy men many had done be-  
fore them. For in their Canticles they had  
sufficient matter of praise. They might  
with *David* sing that which is in the  
Psalme, verse, 1, 2, 3. *I will praise the*  
*Lord with my whole heart: I will speake*  
*of thy marvellous works: I will be glad*  
*and reioyce in thee, I will sing praise to thy name*  
*O most High.* For that mine enemies  
turned backe: they are fallen and perished  
as stubble.

at thy presence. They might also worthily say that out of the 34. Psalme, vers. 1, 2, 3, 4. I will alwayes giue thanks vnto the Lord: his praise shall be in my mouth continually. My soule shal glorie in the Lord: the humble shall heare it and be glad. Praise ye the Lord with me and let vs magnifie his name together. I sought the Lord and hee heard me, yea he deliuered mee out of all my feares. Besides, that which is in the 103. Psal. vers. 2, 3, 4. My soule praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefites: Which forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thine infirmities: Which redeemeth thy life from the grane, and crowneth thee with mercie and compassions. Could they also sing any thing more fit and commendations, that they might acknowledge god to be their defence and strength, theyr buckler, refuge and most sure place of defence, then that which is most zealously and sweetely sung by the Prophet in the 8. and beginning of the 144. Psalmes. And ioyned vnto all this, that out of the 16. Psalme, vers. 12, 13, 14. What shall I render vnto the Lord, for all his benefites toward me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I



498 *The twentieth four Sermon*

*will pay my vowe vnto the Lord, even now in the presence of all his people.* Wherefore also at this day, what neede is there of new Psalmes and songs, when as the holy Ghost doth sufficiently afford vs, wherewith to praise God and giue him thanks for his benefites of all sorts? Howbeit they are not to be reprehended, if any by the instinct of the holy Ghost doo compose any new songs, whereby the goodnesse of God may be set forth and extolled. This then was the chiefe poynt in the *Jewes Rest*. The other as feasts, mirth, sending of presents one to an other, and gifts vnto the poore, were onely annexed to declare their ioy bebecoming the children of God, ioyned with all honestie. Their feasts then were holy and such as God in his law commanded, *to feast in his sight with gladnesse*: sauing that they were far from the Temple, and could not eat of the sacrificed meates. Their ioy also was holy, in as much as they reioyced in the Lord, the God of their saluation, and acknowledged that hee had filled their hearts with gladnesse, and their mouths with laughter, praying that that ioy might continue. In that they sent gifts one vnto

an other, it was done that they might stir  
vp one an other to giue thanks vnto god,  
for the preservation of their life, theyr  
wiues and childrē, their libertie & goods  
and for these things might testifie theyr  
thankfulnes before all men. The gifts be-  
stowed vpon the poor, were signes of their  
charitie. For whereas we haue almost al-  
waies among vs poore and needie, sicke,  
old, Orphanes and others who liue hard-  
ly with smal sustenance, shuld it not haue  
bin a cruel poynt in the publike ioy, if the  
rich should not extraordinarily haue had  
them in remembrance, that by their abū-  
dance their want might be relieued, and  
occasion of reioycing also with the rest,  
giuen vnto them: Wherefore we worthily  
detest their bankets, who in celebrating  
their feasts, giue themselves vnto drunkē-  
nes, ryot, & intemperancie. For God ac-  
curseth such feasts, wherein his name is pro-  
phaned, his good gifts troden vnder foot,  
and his beneficence, drawn into an occa-  
sion of mischiefes. Their prophane mirth  
also is detestable, which haue learned to  
do nothing on the holy dayes, but dance  
& play, that they may so be more & more  
stirred vp to vncleannesse and loosenesse.



And how can the gifts of rich men be bestowed among themselves be acceptable vnto God, if casting away the care of their miserable brethren, they suffer them to be oppressed with pouertie and want, whom yet our Lord and Sauour Christ Iesus hath commended vnto them as his members? It is lawfull then to banquet, be merrie, and send presents one vnto an other, on the holy dayes, so that our banquets be seasoned with sobrietie and the praises of God, our mirth and pastime tempered with talke of his goodnesse: and sending presents vnto the rich for friendships sake, we also bear a careful regard of the poor. For otherwise woe vnto our feasts, woe vnto our mirth and reioycing, which cannot please GOD vntill they be consecrated to his name, and referred to his glorie.

Out of this example we learne, that wee owe vnto God a thankfull acknowledging of his benefits, & praise for those good things which we haue receiued of his hands, for they are as the Prophet *Habakkuk* saith, *the Calues of our lips*: they are also a sacrifice more pleasant and acceptable vnto God, then those of Oxen and

*upon the booke of Ester.*

For  
fat beastes which were offered vnder the  
Law, as in the 50. Psalm after the Pro-  
phet had said; that God had no neede of  
the flesh of Bulls, nor bloud of Calues, hee  
addeth in the 14. verse, *Sacrifice vnto  
God praise; and performe thy vowes vnto  
the Lord;* and in the last verse hee saith,  
*He that offereth praise, he glorifieth me:* as  
on the contrarie, God complaineth of  
nothing more then of the vnthankfull  
minde of his people, not acknowledging  
his benefits. Wherefore he also calleth  
heaven and earth to witnesse against the  
vnthankfulnesse of his people, yea euen  
the *Oxe and the Asse* to condemne them.  
*Isai. 1. 3.* And in the fifth Chapter hee  
complaineth against his people vnder the  
parable of a vine in these words, verse, 4.  
*What could I haue done any more to my  
vine-yard, that I haue not done vnto it? Why  
haue I looked that it should bring forth  
grapes, and lo it bringeth forth wilde Grapes?*  
And by *Jeremie* hee complaineth in this  
ort. Chap, 2, vers. 5. *What iniquitie haue  
your fathers found in me, that they are gone  
farre from me?* and almost in the same  
words in *Michah. 6. vers. 3.* *O my people  
what haue I done vnto thee, or wherein haue*



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*I greened thee?* Wherefore it is not without cause commonly said; that nothing is more vniust, nothing more against nature then an vnthankful person. For as the testifying of a thankfull mind containeth many duties in it, and namely, iustice and truth, by which that is giuen vnto God which is due vnto him, and he is acknowledged to be the author of al good, whereof we are voyd: so on the contrary, an vnthankfull minde is an heape and as it were a bundel of many vices: wherence we see it often come to passe, that those who haue receiued great benefits of God & haue not acknowledged it, haue shortly after perished miserably. Which is apparant in those of *Sodome* and *Gomorrhah* whom *Abraham* deliuered out of the hand of the foure Kings their enemies. For when as by this deliuerance they did nothing profit; shortly after they were destroyed by fire from heauen.

Therefore we see that *Dauid* and other the faithfull seruants of God being deliuered out of daunger, are wont carefully to vowe vnto God, the setting forth of his praise and perpetuall obedience: namely in the 115. Psalme, *Dauid* saith

verse 7. 8. 9. *Returne vnto thy rest o my soule, for the Lord hath bene beneficiall vnto thee. Because thou hast deliuered my soule from death, mine eyes from teares, and my feete from falling; I will walke before the Lord in the land of the liuing.*

Let vs know then, that true thankfulnesse consisteth first and principally in this, that we yeeld vp our bodies a liuely sacrifice, holy and acceptable vnto God, which is our reasonable seruing of him, as the Apostle *Paul* speaketh, *Rom. 12:1.* then that also with our lips wee set forth the goodnesse of God, whereunto that of *Dauid* is to be referred, *It becometh the vpright to praise God,* and he saith by name the vpright, because the praise proceeding from an infidell, not repenting, doth displease God, as God himselfe in these words reproveth the vngodly; *What hast thou to do to declare mine ordinances, that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest to be reformed, & hast cast my words behind thee? And in the first Chapter of *Isa*, the Lord reiecteth the worship which hipocrites and the irrepentant did yeelde vnto him.*



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Do not we then stand in feare, least God should say the same of vs, if after so many benefites receiued at his hand wee goe on still in our sinnes, and thinke that we haue sufficiently satisfied him, with presenting our selues to heare his word, with the often singing of Psalmes, or the multitude of prayers inconsiderately powred out? and that hee should in these termes complaine: what make your bodies before mee without your hearts? what care I for your singing? what weigh I your prayers? they are abomination vnto mee: when you multiply your prayers, I will turne away my face from you, for your hands are full of bloud.

The celebrating then of festiual dayes with songs and mirth, are of no moment or weight with God, vnlesse wee be turned vnto God with all our heart, hearkened effectually with obedience vnto his voyce, and relie wholly vpon him. And these things are to be noted concerning these dayes of rest and publike ioy, which the Iewes willingly did celebrate after their victorie.

There followeth after, how these things became

because a perpetuall law and custome by  
the decree of *Mardocheus*; which *Esther*  
the second time doth confirme, as we  
shall see after, vers. 19. *Mardocheus* then  
as a Magistrate wrote and sent letters to all  
the *Thou* which were in all the provinces of  
the King *Ahasuerus*, farre and neere, inui-  
ding them that they should keepe the four-  
teenth day of the month *Adar*; and the fif-  
teenth thereof, your adding this rea-  
son, According to the dayes wherein they re-  
sted from their enemies; and the month which  
was turned vnto them, from sorrow to ioy,  
and from mourning to mirth. He cometh va-  
rova, that the memorie of Gods benefits  
and graces doth soone slip away, except  
it be stayed by some notable meanes,  
wherefore he commandeth that those  
two dayes wherein they obtayned the  
victorie over their enemies should be  
kept holiday, that they might rest in them  
with an holy rest, thereby to call to me-  
morie the benefit of so great deliverance,  
and to celebrate the grace of God, who  
by a wonderfull meanes did turne their  
sorrow into ioy. In which thing he per-  
formeth the dutie of a good and faithfull  
Magistrate, whereof it is a part to take



Job The Twentie foure Sermon

care that good order be preserved in the Church, the worship of God retained pure, and the memorie of his benefits continued for ever: that in all ages every one may learne to put his trust in God, and to looke for all help and good from him. Heereby then we learne, that when the chiefe Magistrate neglecteth those things which make to the conseruation of pure religion because he is ignorant thereof, the inferior Magistrate ought not therefore to cease, but by reason of his office, procure whatsoeuer shall appertaine to the nourishing and preserving of godlinesse: as heere we see, when *Affuerus* little careth for the doctrine of the *Jewes*, which he did not vnderstand, *Mardochaeus* doth not therefore leaue off, but decreeth those things which he thought to appertaine to the maintaining of the remembrance of so memorable a deliuerance. Wherin sheweth forth not onely his pietie and care of the Church, but also his courage and constancie. For it could not choise but be odious vnto the native inhabitants, when they should yearly see this feast to be celebrated, and so call to remembrance the slaughtering

ter and destruction of their fellow citizens by the Iewes: seeing that no monuments or signes of victorie or offences amongst the people adioyning, can be beholden without indignation and great griefe. But the memorie of the benefites receiued from our God is not to be omitted for the griefe and sorrowe of minde, which the ignorant take at the remembrance of true religion. Yet is it wisely to be foreseene, that after ciuill warres there be nothing done, whereby the minds of men may be offended, and olde wounds wax greene againe, and warre enloones stirred vp. Hence also we learne, that it is the ducie of the faithfull Magistrate, either to decree, or approve by his decree, that which is already by authoritie well ordained, to the preserving and establishing of the good order of the Church, and the outward seruice of God, so that the word of God be alwaies the rule and squire whereby hee frame all his actions. And this is so much the more diligently to be noted and understood, by how much wee see that the slippe is easie in that part, when the question is concerning the power of Magi-



Magistrates in the ordering of Ecclesiastical matters. For some graunt vnto the highest Magistrate, to ordayne in the Church whatsoever pleaseth them, or whatsoever shall be perswaded vnto them by others. But what is this other then to overthrow all religion, by granting such licence vnto men? So we see that the kings of Israel cleaving to their owne opinions did peruert the pure worship of God; and also the kings of *Juda* imitating them, when leauing the doctrine of the lawe, they followed their owne wisdom and sence, as by the example of *Achaz* and *Manasses* it is apparant. Other some will not haue the Magistrate to take any care at all of Ecclesiastical matters, which opinion the Pope holdeth, to vphold more easily his owne tyrannie. What is then heere to be done? That the Magistrate invade not the Pastors office, as to preach the word, administer the Sacraments; also that he change not or innouate any thing in religion at his owne pleasure, or by worldly wisdom and policie: but remembering that he is appointed of God a keeper and defender of the Church, of wholesome and heavenly doctrine, of the worship

worship of God, and of order requisite in the Church, hee vse his authoritie and sword to the defence of the Church, against all force, that the Pastors may retain their right and authoritie, and that those who are slothfull may be stirred vps that sound doctrine, and the right vse of the Sacraments may be conserued; and that by the iudgemēt of the Pastors good lawes may be made, agreeable vnto sound doctrine, that all things may be done in order conuenient in the house of God. And if the times be such that the state of the Church be altogether depraued, and neede reformation; the dutie also of the Magistrate requireth, that he set hand vnto the worke, & prouide that all things be restored to their integritie, according to the word of God rightly vnderstoode, and applied vnto his right vse and end. So we reade, that the holy kings of the I. Chro. 24 Israelites did, as *Dauid* by the aduise of *25. & 26* *Gad* and *Nathan* the Prophets did distribute the orders of the Priests and Leuits, and the courses of their seruice and ministerie. *Salomon* also dedicateth the Temple which he had built with that notable & solemne prayer which is read, 1. King. 8. and



**Ho The twentie foure Sermon**

and confirmeth the order appointed by  
 2.Chro.19. his father. *Iehosaphat* restored as well the  
 2.Kings.12. State ciuill as the Ecclesiasticall. *Ioa* also  
 in his time, after the confusions brought  
 in by *Athalia*, did by the counsaile of *Ie-*  
*hoiada* restore those things that were con-  
 founded, and repaire the ruines of the  
 temple. But the zeale, godlinesse, & con-  
 2.Chro.29. stancie of *Ezechias* and *Iosias*, are especi-  
 2.Kings.23. ally commended, who in their times so  
 Euseb. de happily reformed the Church. So *Con-*  
 vit. Con- *stantine* the great was present in the Cou-  
 stanti.1.1.c. cell of Nice, and heard and approued the  
 37. & alibi. sentences of the Fathers grounded vpon  
 the word of God, and by his authoritie  
 maintained and defended the sound doc-  
 trine, and condemned heresie. Out of all  
 which examples, let the faithfull Magi-  
 strates learne what parts and place they  
 hold in the Church. It remaineth to be  
 shewed how the Iewes did execute that  
 commandement prescribed by *Ester* and  
*Mardocheus*, but those things shal be after  
 declared more at large: So that it shall be  
 sufficiēt for vs, if at this present we learne  
 to submit our selues vnto good cōstituti-  
 ons, by which the remembrāce of the be-  
 nefits of God is cōfirmed in the Church

and

upon the booke of Ester.

SII

and that we testifie both by word and  
deede, euen in the whole course of our  
life, that as we are the people whom God  
hath redeemed and freed from all miserie  
and accursednesse, brought into libertie  
from the thraldome of death and sinne,  
deliuered from so many dangers, and a-  
dorned with so many gifts of his liberali-  
tie: so we will also do all that we may,  
that his name may be set forth with wor-  
thie prayse in Iesus Christ, to whome be  
glorie for euermore. Amen.

## THE FIVE AND twentieth Sermon.

*There remaine those things, which belon-  
ged to the institution of the dayes of  
Purim, prescribed both by Mardo-  
chæus, and by Ester, from the 25.  
verse, vnto the end of the Chapter.*

25. *And when she came before the King, he  
commanded by letters, Let this wicked  
deuise which hee imagined against the  
Iewes, turne vpon his owne head: therefore  
they hanged him & his sons vpon the tree.*

26. *Therefore they called those daies Purim  
of*



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brief the name of Pur, and because of all the  
words of this letter, and because of that  
which they had seen besides this, and of  
that which had come unto them.  
27. The Iewes also ordained, and promised  
for themselves and for their seeds, and for  
all that ioyned unto them, that they would  
not faile to observe those two dayes every  
yeare, according to their writing, and ac-  
cording unto their season.  
28. And that those dayes should be remem-  
bred, and kept throughout every genera-  
tion & every familie, and every prouince,  
and every citie: even those dayes of Purim  
should not faile from the Iewes, and the  
memoriall of them should not perish from  
their seeds.

29. And Ester the Queene the daughter of  
Abihail, and Mordecai the Iewe, wrote  
with all authoritie to confirme this letter  
of the dayes of Purim the second time.

30. Which letters he sent to all the Iewes in  
the hundred and seven and twentie pro-  
uinces of the kingdome of Assueus, with  
words of peace and truth.

31. To confirme those dayes of Purim, ac-  
cording to their appointed times, as Mor-  
decai the Iewe and Ester the Queene  
had

which appointed them, and in that they had pro-  
-vided for themselves and for their posterity  
to the continuance of their falling, and of  
their prospering upon his banner. And  
So it is the decree of Esther had con-  
firmed the fasts of the days of Purim  
as is written in this book. And now  
the things were continued  
**W**hen began to declare how that  
the custom of celebrating those  
days in the which they  
rested, to give thanks unto God for their  
deliverance obtained, was established for  
a law and an ordinance for ever to write,  
by Mordechai as a Magistrate, letters  
being written unto all the Jews wherein  
that was commanded, the reason being  
added, because they rested from their e-  
nemies, and because that their sorrow was  
turned into mirth, and their mourning  
into joy: wherefore they ought to conse-  
crate those days of gladness unto the  
Lord, making a solemn commemoration  
of that victory which God had granted  
unto them. But we now go forward in  
those things which appertain hereunto  
unto the end of the Chapter: for there is  
contained in those letters of Mordechai  
the



the chief cause of this ordinance, which  
is here expressed, to wete, the conspira-  
cie of *Haman*, which by the wisdom of  
*Ester* returned vpon his head: *verse 24.*  
and *25.* After the names of these two  
feasts, which are called the daies of *Purim*,  
*vers. 26.* And last of all how by *Ester*'s  
letters all these things were confirmed,  
in the foure last verses. Whereout wee  
learne, with how great care and diligence  
the memorie of Gods benefits is to be  
preserued, good order appointed in the  
Church, and retained when it is once  
rightly established. Hence also we may  
easily gather what is the right and lawfull  
vse of festiuall dayes.

This is then the especiall and most ex-  
presse cause of the yearly celebrating of  
those two dayes, the malice of *Haman*,  
who thought to haue vtterly destroyed,  
casting lots that he might finde out a fit  
day to accomplish his practises: but that  
day by the prayer of *Ester*, and expressed  
commandement of *Assuerus*, fell vpon his  
owne head, and was vnto him deadly;  
but vnto the Iewes happie. Therefore  
here again is there mention made of the  
malice of *Haman*, and of the charitie and

faith

not possible to be done. 23

faith of *Israel*, that in the celebration of  
this feast; the malice of *Human* should  
neither they, and the good of *Israel* be  
maine in blessedness. So we cometh to  
passe, that the memorie of the notable deli-  
verances of the people of *God*, which  
they have had from their enemies, cannot  
be repeated, without making mention of  
the faith and piety of the one, and on the  
contrarie of the wickedness and godlines of  
the others, as if at any time we fall to talke  
of the deliverance out of *Egypt*, there is  
mention made of the hardnesse of heart,  
and pride of *Pharaoh*, and of his obstinatio.  
*Moses* also is said to have bene deliv-  
ered from the toege of the *Assyrians*, by and  
by there is added the slaughter made by  
the *Angels*, and the shameful death of  
*Sennacherib* himselfe. What can we make  
of the death of the Sonne of *God*,  
*Christ* Iesus our Saviour, but that he shall  
speake of his reason of his death, of the crime  
of the *Scotes* and *Pharisees*, of the vniuersal  
sentence of *Isaiah*, condemning him for  
that he was pronounced an innocent  
of the *Scotes*, to passe that the name of the  
Sonne of *God* be sent forth to the Gentiles,  
as there is mention made of them.



as if man, for examples sake, would note  
 a sworne and most hatefull enemy of  
 Gods people; he would call him another  
 Heman, or a traitour, another Judas. On  
 the contrary, by the remembrance of the  
 Saints, their courage and constancie, and  
 their acts done for the defence of the  
 Church and of the truth are blessed for  
 ever, and God is praised, who powred  
 vengeance on the wicked, but defended  
 the godly, & deliuered them out of their  
 throats. Thus haue you the cause of these  
 feasts.

The name of *Purim* is added; from the  
 name *Per*, which signifieth a lot: which  
 name is rather taken out of the Persian  
 language, and because *Haman* cast lots  
 (which yet deceived his expectation and  
 desire) rather then from any other, that  
 the remembrance of this benefit of God  
 might remaine also amongst the strange  
 nations; and that the vanitie of all lot  
 casters, and other the like superstition  
 which the idolaters were wont to vse  
 might be the more knowne, seeing that  
 God at the prayer of his by his provided  
 and infinite wisdom, had overthrowed  
 all the expectation of the idolaters;

turned it vpon their owne heads. The  
name then of Purim, did serue to call to  
memorie whatsoever God had done in  
fauour of the Iewes, *Mans* practices  
being ouerthrowen, which vpon confi-  
dence of the Ios he tooke in hand. It  
much auayleth to giue conuenient names  
vnto feasts and holy dayes, which may  
fully expresse the matters for memorie  
whereof they were ordained: although  
the names we vse are not so much to be  
regarded, so that the matter be well vnder-  
stood, and that we abuse them not to  
superstition. There followeth the man-  
ner of celebrating and keeping this feast,  
whereby that the Iewes vpon *Mardochai*  
~~mers~~, and vpon those things which they  
new by *Esther* letters, by which they  
were put in danger of their life & goods:  
also by the contrarie letters of *Ahasuerus*,  
which he was granted that they might  
send themselves by armes against their  
enemies, did willingly consent to obserue  
these things which follow. 1. But they  
shall procure that these two dayes shall in con-  
stantly be celebrated, obserued, and solemn-  
ly: according to the appointed time, yerely:  
by all, throughout and in their feasts, and all



that should saye themselves together in  
 whatsoeuer prouince of the kingdom of Aſſy-  
 ſuerus they were diſperſed in euery  
 familie, prouince, and cite for ever. That  
 the dayes of Purim ſhould not ſaye from the  
 Jewes, and their memorie ſhould not periſh  
 from their ſeede. By which it apper-  
 eth that as they lacked the Temple  
 on a publicke place where they might as-  
 ſemble, ſo this feaſt was kept by them  
 every yere in euery cite, village, and fi-  
 milie. Beſides, it ſeemeth that the Jewes  
 which were already returned into the  
 country were not bound to this feaſt: nei-  
 ther is there in any hitoriall memorie  
 made of theſe dayes of Purim kept in Ju-  
 dea. Neither is there any puniſhment ap-  
 pointed for thoſe that neglect it, ſo that  
 they know well that the conſtitution of  
 men neither ought nor could bind  
 the conſcience, or haue the nature of the  
 worſhip of God: for nothing proper  
 is to be accounted the worſhip of God  
 but that which he himſelfe hath appointed  
 in his word preſcribed. I ſtand indeed  
 that thoſe things which ought to be done  
 in thoſe dayes were of themſelves ac-  
 ceptable and pleaſing vnto God, as to me-

to heare his word, to call vpon him,  
to giue him thanks, and magnifie his  
workes, and namely, this so notable a  
deliuerance: to make confession of their  
faith, to relieue the necessitie of the  
poore, to stirre vp one another with  
mutuall exhortations to loue, feare, serue,  
and worship God with a trust in his  
goodnesse: but that all these things were  
no better on these dayes then on other,  
it is certayne.

It is moreover to be noted, that this  
feast is not dedicated vnto *Madduch*  
or vnto *Ester*, but vnto the liuing God  
onely, who onely is to be called vpon in  
the Church. For as he speaketh in the  
42. chap. of *Isai*, vers. 8. *I will not giue  
my glorie vnto other, nor my praise vnto  
images.* From hence therefore we must  
gather, vnto whose honor, and for what  
causes feasts and holydayes may be or-  
dayned, and what is the right meanes  
of celebrating them: to weete, all intem-  
perancie, wantonnes, and riot, which at all  
times displease God, are to be banished  
farre from them: besides, wee must ab-  
staine fro those works, though otherwise  
good, and of their owne nature lawfull,



by which those holy, and diuine actions which are to be done upon the day of rest might be hindered moreover, abundance of worship and seruice which is vsed vpon them, ought to be holp vnto God and finally, there must be reuerend mention made of the faith, constancie and pietie of them whom it pleased God to use to the proseruation and commoditie of his Church. So most willingly shall we make mention of the faith of *Abraham*, the holinesse of the *Prophets*, the constancie of the *Martyrs*, the puritie of *Virgins*, and especially of holy *Mary* the blessed *Virgin*, that cleaſt veſſell by the ſingular grace of God to beare in her wombe the fruite of life: but to dedicate holidayes vnto them, to appoine them any ſeruice or worſhip, to call vpon them or pray vnto them, we ſay is prophane, and ioyned with manifeſt abuſe of Gods worſhip. And thus farre of *Caſtardorburn* letters. *It followeth after, that Eſter* alſo wrote letters to confirme, and by her authoritie to eſtabliſh theſe things, and that they were ſent to all the Iewes through the hundred and fouen and twenty provinces.

of the king's favour, with goods of proper  
riches and assurance: and that thereby those  
dayes of Purim were yet further confir-  
med and established: His remaining done  
by Esther, was not without cause: for that  
she might bee talked of: but it is likely  
that both she and Mordechai should feare  
least the Jewes which were dispersed  
through so many Provinces, would by in-  
deed and time waxe forgetfull of so great a  
benefit: And namely, because those dayes  
of Purim could not be celebrated without  
the indignation and griefe of the rest of  
the inhabitants of that region: for that the  
multitude of those that were slaine, to the  
number of seven hundred and threescore  
fiftie, that eight hundred which were slaine  
in Shushan, and the tenne sonnes of Haman  
would by this means againe be refreshed:  
besides seeing they had no publike place  
to meet in, as they were wont in the Tem-  
ple at Ierusalem, it would be the harder to  
observe this feast: Unto all which you may  
adde, that it was to be feared least after  
that Assuerus, Esther and Mordechai  
were dead, the fauour of the Jewes should  
decay, and in stead of that fauour which  
they had received, there might rise up  
some



some new conspiracy against them: as  
 for the most part it cometh to passe;  
 that old brayles & hatreds are oftentimes  
 renewed, and that the remembrance of  
 hurt sustained with disgrace, can hardly  
 or almost neuer be put out of mens minds.  
 Therefore so much the more diligently  
 did they renew this commandement  
 to them: the end whereof is principally  
 to be noted, which is expressed in the end  
 of the 31. verse, *that it should be a monu-  
 ment of their falling and of their prayer*: that  
 is, by these feasts they would erect a mo-  
 nument for ever, by which it might be  
 testified, that God had regard of their hu-  
 militie, heard their prayers, and was the  
 author and furtherer of so great and so ad-  
 mirable a deliuerance. The ende then of  
 these feasts was an open testifying before  
 all men, that God above doth help those  
 who cast downe themselves before him,  
 and call vpon his name. Which is the prin-  
 cipall fruite to be reaped by this whole  
 Historie, least that we be discouraged in  
 persecutions: but rather that wee should  
 be the more stirred up to seeke God in  
 time convenient: being assuredly per-  
 suaded, that he is neare vnto them that  
 call

call vpon him in truth, and seek him with  
an vpright heart: and that it shall come  
to passe, that those that put their trust in  
him shall neuer be confounded. By this  
example of Ester, all women whom God  
hath raised vp vnto any dignitie and au-  
thoritie, are taught so to vie that fauour  
and authority which they haue, that they  
may procure good order to be established  
in the Church, and to labour that the me-  
morie of Gods benefices towards her be  
 neuer blotted out: being assuredly per-  
swaded, that if they be carried with a  
right zeale of the glorie of God, their  
names be written in the booke of life,  
and that the acts performed by them are  
registered agrest faithfully in the Lords  
monument and records, neuer to be  
put out or abolished by any tract of time.  
And thus haue I set this notice concer-  
ning this translation of the dayes of  
Purim: and thus I giue thanks to God to  
whom be all praises. This translation of this matter  
certaine questions must be dissolved.  
The first, whether it were lawfull for  
Mandathen and Esters to ordaine fe-  
minall dayes to continue for euer:  
and to the dedication of the

Deut. 15. 33

Ester. 15. 33



**Dent. 12. 32** when as he hath expressly manich, thou  
 nothing is to be added, nothing is to be taken aw-  
 ay in those things which God hath com-  
 manded concerning his worship; and  
**Isai. 29. 13.** *Isai. saith, That God is worshipped in vain  
 by the commandments of men.* I say, that  
 it was not *Moses* purpose, to in-  
 stitute any new worship of God, nor af-  
 scribe unto the dayes of *Bur* any grea-  
 ter holynesse, nor vote others, neither to  
 binde any mans conscience to the obser-  
 uation of this ordinance, but they are to  
 those things which God himselfe hath  
 commanded; but whereas God hath  
 granted, yet to man fixe dayes of labour,  
 and hath left it to his will, either to labour  
 or to employ it in holy things and those  
 which appertaine properly unto his ser-  
 vice, *Moses* was onely respect in this,  
 that these dayes should rather be bestow-  
 ed in the remembrance of the benefites  
 of God, and in giuing thanks for such a  
 deliuerance, then in any handiwork; but  
 yet so that they should not be bound with  
 any opinion of necessity, as though God  
 himselfe had commanded it. The same  
 purpose *Isai. 29. 13.* hath in insti-  
 tuting the feast of the dedication of the  
 Temple,

Temple, after he had purged it had the  
 altar from the pollution of sacrifices.  
 Of this feast the Evangelist *St. John* mar-  
 keth mention, and saith, that our Saviour  
 Christ was present at it, walking in *Sabb*  
*street porch*. And if any great abuse or  
 corruption should creep into these feasts  
 instituted by men, it should be lawfull for  
 the Church to abolish them, if by no o-  
 ther means it could not take away the a-  
 buse. *St. Paul* here in *1 Cor. 11* call-  
 eth *the Lord's Supper* an example vnto vs,  
 who brake the brazen serpent in peeces,  
 because they offered incense vnto it, al-  
 though it were erected by Gods com-  
 mandement in the Wilderness; that  
 those who looked upon it might be heal-  
 ed from the biting of the ferie Ser-  
 pents. But when as God did not com-  
 mand that it should be kept for euer, as  
 a remembrance of so great a benefit, *He*  
*did not doubt to stamp it to pow-*  
*der*. So that if God haue commanded  
 any thing without this clause of perpetui-  
 ty, they may for abuses growing thereby  
 strike it away; and then how much more  
 those who are ordained by men. Where it  
 to be noted, that although the Iewes  
 receiued



526 *The benefit of the day*  
 retained sundry benefits. God's  
 handes, as sundry times, & y<sup>e</sup> could they  
 not for every day of them, obtaine a fe-  
 stivall day, as y<sup>e</sup> we read not that they  
 did dedicate any day for any matter so  
 great a benefit, besides that, and the dedi-  
 cation of the Temple after it was purged  
 by *Judas Maccabees*. For as touching  
 that feast which we read instituted in the  
 booke of *Judith*; the Historie is not au-  
 thenticall. Therefore least that festivall  
 dayes should be too much multiplied,  
 and growe into too great a number, there  
 was no feast instituted for that so miracu-  
 lous a passage oute *Jordan*; none for the  
 fall of the walls of *Jericho*; nor for the  
 slaughter of the *Midianites* in the time  
 of *Gideon*; nor for that other so lesse ad-  
 mirable of the *Ammonites*; and other  
 people confederate, in the dayes of *Deba-  
 sazar*; neither for that of the *Assyrians*  
 when the Angell of *God* in one night  
 destroyed their whole host. And who can reckon up those so ma-  
 ny the like miraculous deliverances, for  
 remembrance whereof notwithstanding  
 there were no solemn dayes dedica-  
 ted, although the benefit be noted.

upon the booke of Exodus 127

And this is especially worthy the observation, that Noah being lately preserved from the flood by so many evident miracles, did nevertheless institute no solemne day or festiuitie for the memoriall of this miracle; but was content with continuall meditation thereof in himselfe; and declaration of it vnto others, who were delighted with the rehearfall of such miracles. Neither doe we also reade that Abraham did ordaine any festiual day; & though he receiued from God many notable promises; and wonderful deliuerances.

The instituting therefore of certaine fastes, was a part of the schoolemasters office belonging to the law, in which God gaue shadowes and figures of things to come; wherefore by the coming of our Lord Iesus Christ, all the old fasts, with the rest of the ceremonies, are abolished.

This doubt being dissolved, the answer is vnto the rest will bee the more easie, as if any man demaunde whether there bee any holy dayes expressly commanded by God in the Christian Church, we answer; There are



are not: For it appeareth by the words of  
 Paul, that Christians being well instruct-  
 ed in the faith, did make no distinction  
 of dayes; neither of one more then an-  
 other; according to the *Colossians* he saith,  
*Let us not let any man as judge you in respect of a Sab-  
 bath day, or of the new Moone, or of a Sab-  
 bath.* It is a part of Christian libertie pur-  
 chased by Christ; if we well knowe that all  
 our dayes are equal, and all of like holy-  
 nesse, euen as the vse of all things is holy  
 to a faithfull man, as the Apostle saith.  
 So the ancient Christians came to toge-  
 the every day without difference; to  
 heare the word of God, to be partakers of  
 the Sacraments, and to praye and thank-  
 giuing. *we* well as our forefathers did  
 do so I confesse indeed, that the Apostles,  
 that they might winne the heathens unto  
 the Flocke, did frame themselves vnto  
 their dispositions; to wit, to praye in the  
 Temple, and in the Synagogues on the  
 Sabbath and holy dayes, which is appa-  
 rent in the Historie of the Actes. After-  
 ward the Church encreasing, when all  
 had not opportunitie to come every day  
 to the holy assemblies, there was one day  
 chosen in the weeke, wherein all the peo-  
 ple

ple ſhould come together to bee taught,  
and to employ themſelves with one ac-  
cord in holy exerciſes. And it ſeemeth  
unto me moſt likely, that the firſt day of  
the weeke wherein Chriſt roſe againe  
from the dead (called therefore the Lords  
day) was rather choſen then any other  
to be dedicated to that holy meeting as it  
is eaſily gathered out of 1. Cor. 16. 2. but  
yet without law or comendement, or any  
band of neceſſitie, but onely to keepe an  
order, and that the people might have a  
certaine day of aſſembly, without diffe-  
rence of other dayes, or opinion of grea-  
ter holineſſe. Howbeit antiquitie, the  
uſe of the Apoſtles and the conſent of all  
Churches have brought to paſſe, that it  
ſhould ſeeme a barbarous and inſolent  
wantonneſſe, if any ſhould refuſing that  
prayer any other day for Eccleſiaſticall  
aſſemblies. In which thing notwithſtan-  
ding, there is nothing derogated from  
Chriſtian libertie, which hindereth not  
that all things ſhould bee done in  
order in the Church, as *Paul* hath com-  
manded. There remaineth here to be obſerved  
that all other holidayes, which are



this day the Church obserueth, haue bin brought by litle and litle into the Church since the time of the Apostles, some sooner some later, that for the space of four hundred yeares, these were the onely solemne feasts in the Church, *Easter, Whitsontide, the Natiuitie of Christ Iesuu, the Ascension, and the Epiphanie*, when he was worshipped by the *wise men*. Afterward many were by litle and litle added sundrie times, which grew at the last into an excessiue number. Wherein there is againe is offered an other doubt to be discussed, how, and how farre forth it is lawfull for Christians to institute such feasts. The aunswere is easie, that as long as this doctrine of Christian liberty remaineth, that all dayes are equall, and that there is no greater holinesse in one then in an other, but that any day might alike be consecrated to Gods worship, hath beene lawfull vnto Christians for good orders sake, and for great conueniencie, to instruct the simple, to ordaine certaine dayes for the better calling to remembrance and more plaine expounding yearly vnto the people, of the chiefest benefits of our redemption, of which

upon the Sole of Easter

SI

for the the Natiuitie, Death, Resurrection,  
and Ascension of our Lord Iesus Christ; and  
the sending of the holy Ghost. And also those  
daies which though in some churches they  
beare the names of Saints, yet are ordai-  
ned to put vs in minde of some notable  
thing belonging vnto Christ, wherein the  
ministerie of the Saints did concur: as is  
the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin is  
proper vnto Christ contained by the holy  
Ghost, in the wombe of the Virgin; and the  
Pacification to Christ presented in the Tem-  
ple: the day of the Natiuitie of S. Iohn the  
Baptist, putteth vs in remembrance of the  
preparation of Christes coming in the flesh;  
for the saluation of mankind: the day of  
Peter, of Christ professed to be the Sonne of  
God: the day of Barde, of Christ preached  
open vnto the Gentiles: the day of S. Iohn  
of Christ published by the writing of the  
Gospell, &c. as it is cleare by the prayers  
which those churches make, & the parts of  
scripture which they read on those daies.  
But yet behold what errors by little & little  
haue crept in, as wel in the celebrating of  
these feasts, as in the instituting of others.  
1. Euē at the very beginning there by &c  
by arose an opinio of necessity, even with

Luc. 1.31

Luc. 2.22

Luc. 1.76.

77.

Mat. 16.16

Act. 9.20.

& 22.21.

Ioh. 21.24.



fear of sinne for the breaking of them; which is contrary vnto Christian libertie.

2. Next the holines of one day was accounted greater then of an other, as though Gods grace were more easily found, and more largely granted on the festiual daies then on others; and in this feast rather then in that.

3. There also was there adioyned an opinion of merite, even by the worke it selfe wrought, as though by the visiting of the temples, and ceasing on these daies from work, remission of finnes were purchased, and safeguard or deliuerance from certaine diseases, yea and as though eternall life were due vnto them for it.

4. There followed a negligence and contempt to heare the word of God, and giue themselves vnto holy exercises vpon other dayes.

5. Lastly, there ensued a carefull and scrupulous ceasing from all handiwork after the manner of the Iewes, and the obseruation of the time of the feast, from one twilight vnto the other. But the full heap of prophanation was in the multiplying of the feasts almost without number in euery place, after euery mans fancie

and

and in dedicating of them to the honour  
of Saints, yea, even of them of whose ho-  
liness and sanctitie there was no certaine  
testimonie: & who whom also there was  
their peculiar worship prescribed, that by  
this means their help & intercession might  
more easily be obtained, whereof it came  
so passed, that all kinde of Idolatrie did  
grow into an breeding greatnesse pride  
and wantonnesse, as a silver and flow-  
er of gold, and did out almost choke and quench  
all godlinesse. That therefore the state of  
the Church so miserably fallen, might be  
restored: not without cause first were all  
those feasts abolished which were tainted  
with superstition: after the right use  
and of godly feastes was renewed in the refo-  
rmed Churches, which feastes notwith-  
standing for the old abuses from which  
the people could not be reclaimed, were  
in many places altogether left off: which  
thing was lawfull to be done, because they  
were but the constitutions of men, and  
the fulfylling could not otherwise be taught what  
Christian libertie. Howbeit those  
Churches which in stead of all other  
feastes doo only observe the Lords day  
in order and publike assemblies, must



diligently take heed that they condemne not other Churches, in which many such feasts are still retained, so that mens consciences be not inthrall'd with the yokes of mens constitutions as though they were Gods, and that all abuse, al opinion of the holinesse of one day more then an other, of morit and the like errors which before we have spoken of, be taken away and earnestly reprehended, and all insolencie and exccesse be driven fure away. Finally Christians are bounde all the dayes of their life to follow true holnesse, preferring no day as more holy then an other, continually mindfull of Gods benefices, as every day there is mention made of them in the articles of faith: submitting themselves otherwise to order and Ecclesiasticall discipline, that with one consent they may be partakers of doctrine, Sacraments, prayer, praise and thanks-giving and exhorting one another to the worship and honor of God, and to mutual love and charitie, to holnesse and righteousness, and to retain that libertie which Christ Iesus our Lord hath purchased with his blood, to whom be all honor and glorie for ever. Amen.

## THE SIXE AND twentieth Sermon.

The honour of Mardocheus is confir-  
med and augmented, and peace gran-  
ted to the Church.

### CHAP. X

1. The day after this the king Assuerus laid a rest  
upon the land, and upon the Isles of  
the sea.

2. And all the acts of his power, and of his  
might, and the declaration of the dignitie  
of Mordecai, whereby the King mag-  
nified him, are they not written in the booke  
of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media  
and Persia?

3. For Mordecai the Jew was the next un-  
to King Assuerus, and great among the  
Jewes, and accepted among the multitude  
of his brethren, who procured the  
wealth of his people, and spake peace to all  
his seede.



**A**mongst other reasons wherewith *David* stirreth up both himselfe and others to praise God, hee also bringeth this, *That his anger endureth but a while, but in his fauour is life: so that if weeping lodge with you in the night, yet in the morning you shall be glad.* This is confirmed by many examples, and ordinarie experience, especially in the Church, which is the house of God in which hee dooth shewe forth the riches of his bountie & mercie. That one booke of the Iudges doth afford vs many the like examples, of the times wherein God chastised his people, be compared with those in which sending them deliuerers, hee granted them peace and quietnesse.

But this Historie which wee haue in hand, doth clearly enough shew the same vnto vs: For, as we haue seene, when as the Iewes beeing for two moneths space afflicted, did humble themselves before God, and cried vpon the Lorde, they obtained at Gods hand that deliuerance which wee haue heard, whereby their name became fearefull vnto the Gentiles, and they obtained rest from their enemies.

Now

Now this booke is concluded and shut  
vp with the recitall of their tranquillitie,  
which was confirmed and increased by  
that great authoritie and fauour wherein  
*Mardochaeus* was, and which he so vsed,  
that he was deare vnto the king, and be-  
loued of all the people. He was also care-  
full especially for the good of the Iewes,  
and provided what he might for the rest  
of his posteritie. Whereby it came to  
passe, that they enioyed long and happie  
peace, the Lord bestowing his fauour on  
them a long while, when as his wrath had  
passed in a moment. This conclusion of  
this booke is now to be weighted by vs,  
with a briefe recapitulation to be gathe-  
red of the chiefe points of those things  
which we haue expounded, that we may  
constantly expect our peace and quiet  
from his grace and fauour, who in all ages  
hath granted it vnto his Church, after  
that he hath exercised it for a season vn-  
der diuers afflictions.

First it is sayd, that King *Ahasuerus* layed  
tribute upon the land, and upon the yles of  
the sea. There is mention made of this  
tribute as of an extraordinarie matter.  
And it is likely that it was then imposed,



538 *The sixe and twentieth Sermon*  
when *Xerxes* the sonne of *Assaerus* made  
his preparatiō for his voiage into *Greece*,  
for which he gathered so great an armie,  
to weete, of twentie hundred thousand  
men, if we may belecue *Herodotus*: for  
which action, there was of necessitie re-  
quired a huge masse of gold and siluer,  
and therefore there was neede of extra-  
ordinarie tributes and subsidies: from  
whence it seemeth that common prouerb  
sprang among the *Persians*, that *Cyrus*  
was a Father, *Cambyses* a Lord, *Darius* an  
huckster of the kingdome, as though he  
made payle of his people. So that kings  
do not by any thing sooner purchase the  
note of tyrannie, or of couetousnesse and  
filthie desire of gaine, then by great & ex-  
traordinarie exactions vpon their subiects.  
But why is there heere mention made of  
this tribute? It is likely that it is in regard  
of that which followeth, wherein is declar-  
ed in how great fauour and authoritie  
*Mardocheus* was with the king, and that it  
might be signified that the Iewes were  
free from this tribute, which was the grea-  
test amplification & increase of the peace  
and tranquillitie of the Church. In which  
matter the singular fauour of God doth  
shine,

shine, who causeth the poore captives to be spared, whē in the meane while the naturall subiects of the kingdome are charged, some with the labours & dangers of war, some with exactions & diminishing of their goods and substance. Lo what the grace and fauour of a wise Governour can do, in the sparing of those that haue most neede, such as it is likely that the Iewes were, in comparison of the naturall inhabitants. Wherefore *Mardochaeus* did nothing vnworthy praise or against his duty, whē he procured their release with especiall care. I grant that some are not to be oppressed, that others may be released, when the case is of those burdens & taxes which belong vnto the profit or defence of all: but yet there is no cause but that poore strangers may wisely relieue themselves from those burdens which Princes exact of their naturall subiects. So *Ioseph* released the familie of *Jacob* his father from al the burdenes of the *Egyptians*, who were compelled to sell their flocks and their possessions vnto *Pharao* for corne: when the *Israelites* were freely sustained by the munificence and liberalitie of the king, for the loue which he bare to *Ioseph*, for that

signor

faith

Gen. 47.12



64p The sixe and twentieth Sermon

faithfulnesse and wisdom which he had  
sufficiently tried to be most necessarie  
and profitable for him & his whole king-  
dome, in the government of the affayres  
of the realme. So that it was no marvaile,  
if the king *Assuerus* for the like experi-  
ence which he had of the faithfulness and  
discretion of *Mardachew*, profitable for  
the government of his kingdom, did for  
his sake make the Jewes free from this ex-  
traordinarie tribute. W. 211. 12  
Next over the historie passeth over in  
silence the acts of *Assuerus* and the set-  
ting forth of the dignitie of *Mardochieus*,  
wherewith the king had magnified him:  
because they are written in the booke of  
the Chronicles of the Kings of *Media*  
and *Persia*. There was indeede a great  
preparation made by *Assuerus* vnder the  
condemnation of *Xerxes* his sonne, but very un-  
doubtedly all histories do obforge: and the  
rest of his acts the Chronicles of the *Per-  
sians* being lost are now unknown. Now  
as touching *Mardachew*, it is to be sup-  
posed, that his wisdom, faithfulness, and  
watchfulness, were sufficiently tryed and  
approved by *Assuerus*; seeing that hee  
made so great account of him. For al-  
though

though sometimes Princes do promote  
 vniuersally them vpon sodaine aduise and  
 affection, which we haue seene in *Hannu*,  
 yet that dignitie continueth not long: for  
 in short space they bewray either their  
 pride and folly, or their wickednesse, and  
 so in a moment fall headlong backe a-  
 gaine. Wherefore it is certaine that *Nehemiah*  
*dochaus* was adorned with vertues fit for  
 that place and dignitie which he sustai-  
 ned: for otherwise being an alien, newly  
 vpstart, and lifted vp from base state to so  
 high honor, and procuring at his first  
 comming to his estate that edict, by force  
 and authoritie whercof the Iewes slewe  
 seuentie and five thousand of their ene-  
 mies at one massacre; it is sure that hee  
 was watched, and await layd for him; in  
 so much that if he had not shewed great  
 faithfulness in his office, been most trustie  
 vnto the King, and most wise and vpright  
 in his government, he should not long  
 haue retained that dignitie. Nay if be-  
 sides, all things had not had prosper-  
 ous successe which hee dealt in, there  
 would not haue wanted those who would  
 haue accused and slandered him as the  
 cause of all the confusions which might  
 arise



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arise in so great a monarchie. Therefore God did adorne him not onely with gifts meete and necessary to beare out so great a charge, but also did compasse him with speciall grace and fauour, whereby hee might be safe from all the bitings of enuie and despight, and couered against all the false slanders and injuries of the malicious. So was his gouernment profitable vnto the whole kingdom, and procured peace vnto the Church: whereby it appeareth, how great difference there is between him who ruleth the commonweith in the feare of God, and him who is ruled by his affections. The gouernement of *Haman* was troublesome to the Church, hurtfull to the people, dishonourable vnto the king, and hated of all men: but the rule of *Mardochay* was profitable and peaceable vnto the Church, gainefull vnto the kings subiects, and finally most honorable vnto the king. Wherefore it is for the behoofe and profite of all States, that their gouernment be comitted vnto wise men fearing God: contrariwise it bringeth destruction vnto the, if men ambitious, couetous, desirous of reuēge, and doing all things with passion for their own profit,

profit, do sit at the helme to gouerne the  
rest. So we reade that when *Ioseph* gover- *Gen. 41.*  
ned *Egypt*, the kingdome was happy and  
quiet: and vnder *Samuel* the state of the *1. Sam. 7.*  
people was blessed, which vnder the rule *1. Sam. 2.*  
of the sonnes of *Heli* was most vnhappy. *1. Sam. 31.*  
The same kingdome being almost spoy-  
led and wasted vnder *Saul*, was restored *2. Sam. all.*  
by the wisdom and pietie of *David*. Fi-  
nally, all affayres either publicke or pri-  
uate do speede well, if good me and care-  
full in their office do manage them: on  
the contrarie, when wicked or negligent  
men haue them in hand, they come to no-  
thing; and therefore *Iethro* the father  
in lawe of *Moses*, when he gaue him ad-  
uise for the choosing of Iudges, by whom  
he might be holpen in deciding of con-  
trouerfies, warneth him that he choose  
men of courage, fearing God, dealing truly, *Exo. 18. 21.*  
hating conetousnes. So *David* promisseth,  
that he will not suffer either in his house *Psal. 101.*  
or in his kingdome wicked and vicious men;  
but that with great care and diligence  
hee would seeke out godly men, that they  
might dwell with him and serue him. So  
that there is no certayner prognostica-  
tion, whereby either hurt and infelicite is  
threat,



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1. P. 1. 1. 1.

2. P. 1. 1. 1.

3. P. 1. 1. 1.

4. P. 1. 1. 1.

5. P. 1. 1. 1.

threatened vnto any State, then when the wicked raigne and beare rule therein: or whereby happinesse and good successe is promised, then when godly men sit chiefe in the gouernment thereof. Wherefore we are with most feruent prayers to craue at Gods hand, that the commonwealth may be gouerned by men that truly feare God, and that are carefull of publique peace and tranquillitie, respecting the common good, and not their owne profit.

6. P. 1. 1. 1.

7. P. 1. 1. 1.

In fewe words are the dignitie and vertues of *Mardocheus* set forth in the third verse: his dignitie, that he was next vnto the King *Ahasuerus*, and great among the *Jewes*: his vertue, that he was accepted of all his brethren, procured the good of his people: and spake peaceably to all his seede. It was no small honor to possesse the second place of dignitie to the king, in so mightie and flourishing a Monarchie: so that he had neede to be furnished with rare, exquisite, and heroicall vertues, to be able to guide the affaires of so great an estate with prayse and honor. But it was a farre greater honor and dignitie vnto him to be a member of the Church, and to retaine true godlinesse and religion among

among the delicacies and riot of so great  
a court, then to be the Viceroy of so high  
a Monarch. Of this mind was *Ioseph*, who *Gen. 48. 1.*  
he more esteemed to haue his children  
partakers of *Jacob's* blessing, then of all  
the riches of *Egypt*. The like also *Mo-*  
*ses* did, who had rather suffer with the *Heb. 11. 24.*  
people of God, then to be accounted the sonne  
of *Pharaoh's* daughter. *Daniel* also in *Ba-* *Daniel, 6.*  
*bylon* had rather endanger his life in the  
*Lions* lawes, then neglect his ducie in  
praying vnto God. It is not sayd, how  
long this dignitie of *Mardocheus* lasted,  
but it is likely that it endured vnto his  
death, to the profit and commoditie of  
the Church of God: wherefore God also  
blessed the Monarchie of the *Persians*,  
because his Church therein had a peace-  
able seate. So God is wont to blesse Na-  
tions & Kingdomes in which his Church  
is harboured, with quiet and tranquillie:  
and he doth diuers times choose out  
some of his Church to be rulers, that  
thereby the peace of the Church may  
the better be confirmed and established.  
And who can hinder the purpose of  
God, but that he may promote whome  
pleaseth him to the highest top of honor?



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So the kingdome of *David* was established, maugre *Saul* and all his practises, and in spite of all the borderers, who laboured to hinder the setting thereof.

Of the vertues of *Mardocheus*, the first is gentlenesse and curtesie, whereby hee was accepted of all his brethren. For vnmindfull of his former estate hee had despised his brethren, or had behaued himselfe towards them proudly by reason of his dignitie, he should not haue bene esteemed or beloued by them: but on the contrarie he loued them, and did abate himselfe to their estate, whatsoeuer dignitie he obtained; shewing that he esteemed nothing more pretious, then that he might be accounted among the seede of *Abraham*, a member of the Church, and a brother of all the faithfull. This thing *David* did set forth in himselfe, saying,

*Psal. 16. 3 All my delight is in the Saints that are on the earth, and in those that excell in vertue.*

Another of his vertues is his studie and carefulnesse for the wealth and commoditie of the Church, and his diligent search of all those things which made any whit to the preservation of the doctrine of the law, & the seruice of God: a most worthy

care

are certainly for all those whome God hath exalted to any dignitie or authoritie. For what greater thing I pray, can they performe, then to preferue that people which God hath chosen vnto himself for his inheritance; & as a most pretious iewel by what meanes can their memories be more highly commended? Truly those great men *Dauid, Ezechias, Iosias, Constantine the great*, are not so much comended for their great exploits which they did, although euery one were most renowned in them; as for their zeale towards God, and carefull preservation of his Church, and the establishing in it of Gods worship, and the safe defending it against all heresies; by the bright shining of the heauenly doctrine. Finally, *Mardocheus* spake peace or prosperitie to all the seeds of the Iewes: that is, he provided for them against the time to come; and tooke care that after his death the state of the Church should prosper & remaine flourishing: which care assuredly doth especially beecome those whom God hath called to such publike places. So we see with how great care *Dauid* did provide for his *Salomon*, giving him precepts,

1. Chr. 22. 6



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*Verse. 17.* and exhorting him vnto his doctie, together with all the *Princes* of his people, that the Temple might be built, Gods seruice maintayned pure, and the state gouerned with religion and iustice. If then the fathers of families and priuate households are wont not without cause to provide for their posteritie, how much more ought they to do it who beare the name and charge of the fathers of the people, and nourses of the Church? By these vertues was *Mardocheus* great among the Jewes, and left behinde him an happie and blessed memorie for euer.

It remayneth that wee gather into a brieve summe, those things which particularly haue bene hitherto expounded. The principall scope and drift of this booke is, that God might set before our eyes the care which he bare towards his Church in the time of *Assuerus*, and deliuered it from the conspiracie of *Haman*, and gaue it a notable victorie ouer all her enemies. The end of this deliuerance, as also of all other which God at sundrie times bestowed on his people, is this, that we may learne in the time of affliction and persecution, to hope and looke for help,

help, succour and deliuerance from God alone, who sendeth it vnto his when it is most conuenient time, euen as we haue seene it to come to passe in al the regions about vs, as in *Switzerland, Germanie, England and Scotland* in which, when as there haue bene troubles raysed for religion, God hath deliuered those Churches, and giuen them peace and tranquillitie. Whereupon *France and Flanders* ought to be raysed vp with good hope of deliuerance, which this long while, and at sundrie times, haue sustained the burden of most cruell persecutions and sharpe warres. We haue seene then for the setting forth of the greatnes of this deliuerance, the largenesse of the empire of *Assyria* described in the first chapter, and the magnificence & excellēce of his feasts. The end of which feasts was lamentable and vnluckie, the Queene *Vashti* refusing to come at the Kings commandement, whereupon she was diuorced, that so there might a way be prepared to the taking in of *Ester*, which is declared in the second Chapter, together with the benefite wrought by *Mardocheus* for the King; God so before hand preparing fit instru-



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ments for the bringing to nought of *Hama*  
*man* wicked deuises: which things in the  
third chapter wee haue discuffed. For  
when as he was lifted up by the King a-  
boue all his courtiers, and was worship-  
ped of all fauing *Mardocheus*, he tooke  
so great indignation at it, that he tooke  
counsaile how to make away *Mardo-*  
*cheus*, and the whole nation of the Jewes  
at one slaughter. To which purpose by  
his false accusations and flanders, he ob-  
tayned of the king an edict, whereby  
partly by *Hamas* false suggestions, and  
*Assuerus* ouer great credulitie, the Church  
was layd open to be spoyled and murde-  
red, without any difference of men or  
women, children, or infants. Which be-  
ing published and made knowen, the  
Jewes turned themselves vnto mour-  
ning, weeping, fasting, and praying, and  
namely *Mardocheus*, who left not to vrge  
and solicit *Ester*, vntill he had perswaded  
her to make supplication vnto the King  
for her people. Which thing she did af-  
ter three dayes and three nights fast, ce-  
lebrated, as well by her selfe, as by all the  
Jewes inhabitants of *Susa*. Wee haue  
scene

scene the effect of these prayers: that by them there was an entrie made open for *Ester* vnto the King, shee found fauour in his sight, with great promises of obtaining whatsoever she should demaund, euen vnto the halfe of the kingdome. But shee was content at the first, to request the King and *Haman* to come vnto her to a banquet: and then desired none other thing, but that the next day it would be the Kings pleasure to come the next day vnto another banquet. In the meane while *Haman* tooke counsaile speedily to make away *Mardocheus*, and by the aduise of his friends erected a gallowes, that the next day they might hang *Mardocheus* thereon: but as in the sixt Chapter is shewed, God turned his counsaile to a contrarie effect: the King commanding him to leade *Mardocheus* through the streetes of the citie with that great honor, which *Haman* himselfe had prescribed: whereupon returning sad and full of indignation vnto his house, he heareth from his friends the sentence of condemnation, which we haue declared in the



7. chapter, &c. which at the *Queenes* complaint and petition was fulfilled, *Haman* being hanged on that same gallows which he had prepared: and this was also besides, a great effect of the prayer and repentance of the *Iewes*: but farre greater did follow in the eight Chapter, wherein is declared, that the riches and goods of *Haman* came vnto *Ester*, and his honors vnto *Mardocheus*: and there was a contrarie edict vnto the former written in fauour of the *Iewes*, whereupon the *Iewes* were made partakers of ioy and publicke gladnes, as in the ninth Chapter. We haue heard also how the *Iewes* performed the matter, being authorized by the Kings Proclamation, and slew seuentie and five thousand and eight hundred of their enemies, who sought the goods and the liues of them, their wiues and children; so that the rest of the people being made afraide, dared not once to open their mouthes against the *Iewes*, God restraining their minds, and as it were compassing them about with a wall of fire. Which singular benefite of the Lords, *Mardocheus* with *Ester* the *Queene*, magnifying as they were

were bound, and fearing least in short time the memorie thereof would decay, did by their authoritie and proclamation, commaund that the fourteenth and fifteenth dayes of that moneth wherein their enemies were slaine, should be celebrated with a perpetual festiuitie, and called the dayes of *Purim*: because the lots which *Haman* cast, did appoynt those dayes for the vtter destruction of the Iewes; but God had heard the cries and fastes of his, & had returned on the heads of the enemies, the mischiefs which they had deuised for others. Finally, we haue scene that the power and honour which before were *Haman*s, and after bestowed by *Assuerus* the King vpon *Mardocheus*, were more and more encreased and confirmed: and peace and tranquillitie procured vnto the Church then dispersed among so many Nations. Out of al which we learne, being taught by experience of Gods goodnesse, that in the greatest distresses, & most dangerous and desperate cases, our trust is to be reposed in God: whose power is so great, and confirmed vnto vs by so many proofes, that it is not



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to be doubted, but that he wil most powerfully deliuer vs out of all daungers, if we crie ynto him: yea and which more is, Satan and all the world in vaine wringing at it, he will giue vnto vs eternall life, which that most precious bloud of Christ Iesus our Lord shed once vpon the Crosse, hath purchased for vs. To God him alone be all glorie, praise, and all power and strength for euer.

*Amen.*

*Glorie be to God alone.*

**F I N I S.**









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the chiefe points which are  
contained in these 26. Sermons.  
vpon the tenne Chapters  
of the Booke of  
*Ester.*

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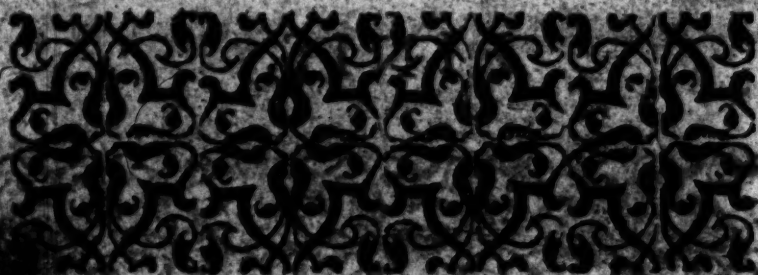
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